

many felt. Time, especially in the first months after Stalin's death, continued to be tough, and the first tangible change in it appeared only after the exposure of the falsified case of the "killer doctors" and the release of these people (which happened primarily on the initiative of the same Beria. - / B . WITH./). Time did not predispose to too frank conversations on such topics, but I remember that with reservations, with reservations, different people still showed anxiety related to the position that Beria occupied after Stalin's death. Among the variously expressed anxieties were these and such

shades: but will not Beria try to inherit the place of Stalin in the full sense of the word?

Well, about the degree of closeness of Beria to Stalin, especially in recent years, Simonov, mindful of his Georgian acquaintances and conversations, was hardly mistaken. Surely someone, but Konstantin Mikhailovich, should have understood that Stalin's attack on the "Mingrelian-nationalist group" was an attack on Lavrenty Pavlovich as well. And anxiety ... Those with whom Simonov talked, probably had anxiety. You just need to consider who he could talk to. These were, for the most part, colleagues in the literary guild, and officials from the agitprop and culture departments who oversaw literature, like the one in Moscow. They communicated to some extent with Khrushchev, when he was the head of the Communists in Moscow, and with Malenkov as secretary of the Central Committee. Dais Molotov probably met, especially since the wife of Vyacheslav Mikhailovich showed interest in people of art. Yes, and the Molotov cult before the war was very strong, second only to Stalin's. But these people never had to contact Beria. His personality was surrounded by an aura of mystery associated with his Chekist past. And the increase in the influence of Lavrenty Pavlovich, respectively, led to a decrease in the influence in the collective leadership of Nikita Sergeevich or Georgy Maximilianovich. There are no words, Khrushchev and Malenkov were not sugar people and they killed innocent souls no less than Beria, and maybe even more. But both Simonov and those with whom he spoke in the spring and summer of 1953 belonged to those who successfully survived all the purges and whom Beria did not have to be released from the Lubyanka dungeons in 1938-1939. Yes, and the true role of party leaders in the repressions Simonov and his interlocutors probably did not fully imagine at that moment, writing off everything to the NKVD. So the "stranger" Beria was perceived as much more dangerous than his usual Malenkov, Khrushchev and Molotov.

Lavrenty Pavlovich, if he was popular, then only among the "secret academicians" and the directors' corps associated with the Special Committee. But they have no effect on the balance of power in the Kremlin could.

On March 9, 1953, on the day of the funeral of Stalin, whose body was placed in the Lenin Mausoleum, Malenkov, Beria and Molotov spoke from the podium of the Mausoleum with speeches full of official sorrow and oaths of loyalty to the cause of the deceased. Konstantin Simonov, who was present on Red Square that day, conveyed his impression of their speeches: in an old newspaper, they do not differ too much from each other, except for the fact that in Molotov's speech, in its first paragraph, it is said about Stalin

a little more humane, a little less bureaucratic than in other speeches. However, the difference, which now cannot be caught in the text of these speeches, but which was then completely obvious to me, consisted in the fact that Malenkov, and after him Beria, made purely political speeches over Stalin's coffin, which it was necessary to make on this occasion. But in the way these speeches were delivered, as they spoke, there was not even a hint of their own attitude towards the dead, there was not even a shadow of personal grief,

regrets or excitement, or feelings of loss - in this sense, both speeches were absolutely equally cold. Malenkov's speech, delivered in his rather rounded voice, revealed a little less the absence of any feeling of sorrow. Beria's speech, with his accent, with his sharp, sometimes croaking intonations in his voice, revealed the absence of this grief more clearly. But in general, the state of mind of both speakers was the state of people who came to power and were satisfied with this fact.

Molotov's speech ... differed little in text from others, but it was spoken by a man saying goodbye to another person, whom he, in spite of everything, loved, and this love, along with the bitterness of loss, even broke through with some kind of shudder in the voice of this hard-stoned person. I remembered ... the plenum at which Stalin spoke with such cruelty about Molotov, even by this contrast I could not help but appreciate the depth of something that continued to exist for Molotov, not completely cut off from him with the death of Stalin, connecting these two people - dead and alive.

Indeed, in the last months of Stalin's life, Molotov was clearly under attack in connection with the "doctors' case" and the case of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, with which they tried to connect his wife P.S., who was in exile. Pearl. Nevertheless, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich managed to maintain some, if not friendly, then at least warm feelings for the generalissimo. Although he was afraid, of course. After all, Molotov could not forget how in 1945 he had to shed a tear in front of his comrades in the Politburo, write a letter of repentance to Stalin in order to avoid a serious threat of execution. I did not forget the one who ordered the arrest of Polina. But Molotov also retained the memory of his former friendship with Koba, with whom only he and Voroshilov of all members of the Politburo were on "you." Malenkov and Beria, as well as Khrushchev, who did not speak at Stalin's funeral, had only one real feeling towards Stalin - fear. Moreover, in Lavrenty Pavlovich and Nikita Sergeevich, this fear grew into hatred. Malenkov, so he tried only to quickly forget about the cartridge that had died in the Bose, as if it were a terrible dream. He was the closest of all the heirs to Stalin, only he owed his promotion from the lowest levels of the hierarchy to the very top, and even during the life of the leader he was semi-officially considered his successor. Probably, Georgy Maksimilianovich, in the depths of his soul, nevertheless felt something like gratitude to Stalin for his rise from rags to riches, and therefore, not as openly as Beria, demonstrated his indifference to the deceased.

Malenkov wanted to forget, but not to expose Stalin. Not that - Khrushchev and Beria. They sincerely wished to put all sins on the great helmsman, so that their own complicity in recent crimes would not be revealed. But Beria hurried with this case, immediately restoring other members of the Presidium against him, who feared that he was trying to whitewash only himself, but at the same time he could blame them for

joint crimes with Stalin. Khrushchev, on the other hand, wisely waited three years, and only after he significantly reduced the number of those who worked with Stalin in the Central Committee and concentrated the main power in his hands, pushing Malenkov and Molotov to second positions, at the XX Party Congress began a campaign to expose the "cult of personality". Such a campaign could become a tool for consolidating the already acquired power, but

Beria did not capture it as a tool, but he immediately laid out the anti-Stalinist cards on the table, hoping to redistribute power in his favor with their help - and lost.

Konstantin Simonov described how it happened: "Shortly after the announcement of the falsification of the case of doctors, members and candidate members of the Central Committee were introduced in the Kremlin, in two or three rooms designated for this, with documents testifying to Stalin's direct participation in the whole story with "doctors- murderers", with the testimony of the arrested head of the investigation department of the former Ministry of State Security Ryumin about his conversations with Stalin, about Stalin's demands to toughen interrogations - and so on and so forth. There were also testimonies of other persons, each time directly related to Stalin's role in this. There were recordings of conversations with Stalin on the same topic, I'm not convinced, but it seems that they were originally recorded on equipment, and then transferred to paper.

I read these papers in three or four doses for about a week. Then the reading was stopped, cut off at once. The idea to provide the members and candidates of the Central Committee with these documents for reading belonged, undoubtedly, to Beria, it was he who had these documents, and later it turned out that everything was so in the spring of the 53rd, but since it was found out by a bad person - an enemy of the people of Beria, it became true for Simonov only after when, after Beria's arrest, the party confirmed - yes, the "killer doctors" - were innocent. propaganda allegations that Beria was allegedly involved in the fabrication of this case. - / B. S. /). He wanted to acquire additional popularity by showing himself to be an impartial person, a person who was not accidentally pushed aside somewhat in the last months of Stalin's life, a person whom Stalin did not trust or ceased to trust, a person who was in no way inclined to continue those cruelties, outrageous lawlessness, which, judging by the documents presented to you for reading, they were connected directly with Stalin, with his initiative, with his demands. Putting the documents on display, Beria seemed to assert that he was both far and categorically against all this, that he was not going to cover up Stalin's sins, on the contrary, he wanted to present him in his true form.

The reading was hard, the notes looked like the truth and testified to Stalin's morbid mental state, to his suspicion and cruelty, bordering on psychosis. The documents were grouped in such a way as to present Stalin precisely and only from this side (Lavrenty Pavlovich, it seems, was ready to go to the end and unconditionally condemn Stalin as a ruler and personality, in contrast to the cautious Khrushchev: on the one hand and on the other hand - bad that he shot innocent people, but he won such a war! / - B.S. /).

Here he is your Stalin, as Beria would say, I don't know about you, oh from

I renounce him. I don't know about you, but I intend to tell the whole truth about him. Of course, at the same time, he presented in the documents only the truth that he needed and benefited from, leaving everything else out of the brackets.

About a week these documents were in use. After that, they were never seen again. When Fadeev and Korneichuk returned (from a foreign trip. - /B.S./) and I told them about these documents, their eyes went wide, but they themselves could no longer read them.

It must be said that, although Beria's goal was rather vile (no more vile than Khrushchev's at the twentieth congress; only in contrast to Nikita Sergeevich, who firmly cleaned the archives of documents that convicted him of involvement in repressions in Moscow and Ukraine; Lavrenty Pavlovich did not have time to carry out such an operation in Georgia. - /B.S./) and it soon became completely clear to me that these documents, even if they were specifically selected, were not fake. Therefore, for the moral blow that I experienced during Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress, I was probably more ready than many other people.

An interesting thing turns out: if Khrushchev exposes Stalin's crimes, then this is a "moral blow", and if Beria does the same, then this is just an advertising campaign aimed at increasing the popularity of the vile chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs!

Stalin's daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva in her book "Twenty Letters to a Friend" claims that during Stalin's last illness, when the doctors no longer doubted the near end, "only one person behaved almost indecently - it was Beria. He was excited to the extreme, his face he, already disgusting, was now and again distorted by the passions that burst him, and his passions were ambition, cruelty, cunning, power, power ... And this was written on his forehead. He went up to the bed and peered into the face of the patient for a long time - the father sometimes opened his eyes, but, apparently, it was unconscious or in a clouded consciousness. Beria looked then, glaring at these cloudy eyes; he wanted to be "the most faithful, the most devoted" - which he tried with all his might to appear to his father and in which, unfortunately, he succeeded for too long ...

In the last minutes, when everything was already over, Beria suddenly noticed me and ordered: "Take Svetlana away!" Those who stood around looked at him, but no one thought to move. And when it was all over, he was the first to jump out into the corridor and in the silence of the hall, where everyone stood silently around the bed, his loud voice was heard, not hiding his triumph: "Khrustalev! Car!"

It was a magnificent modern type of a crafty courtier, the embodiment of oriental treachery, flattery, hypocrisy, which entangled even his father - who, in general, was difficult to deceive. Much of what this hydra did has now become a stain on the name of my father, they are largely to blame together, and the fact that in many ways Lavrenty managed to cunningly trick his father and laughed at the same time with his fist is beyond doubt for me. And this was understood by everyone "above" ...

Now all his nasty insides were pouring out of him, it was difficult for him to restrain himself. I'm not alone - many understood that this was so. But its wild

they were afraid and knew that at the moment when their father was dying, no one in Russia had greater power and strength in their hands than this terrible man.

Beria had reason to rejoice at the sudden death of Stalin. In recent years, Iosif Vissarionovich was clearly preparing a purge in the upper

echelon of power, and the investigation in the "Mingrelian case" was directed primarily against him. Probably, Lavrenty Pavlovich could not hide his joy that now, as it seemed to him, he had survived and had every chance of dying a natural death.

S.I. Alliluyeva testifies that on the second day after Stalin's death, even before the funeral, at the Kuntsevskaya dacha, "by order of Beria, they called all the servants and guards, the entire staff serving the dacha, and announced to them that things should be immediately taken out of here (it is not known where), and everyone must leave this room.

It was impossible for anyone to argue with Beria. Completely bewildered, who did not understand anything, they collected things, books, dishes, furniture, loaded everything onto trucks with tears - everything was taken away somewhere, to some kind of warehouses ... The MGB-KGB had a lot of such warehouses in their time. People who served here for ten or fifteen years, not out of fear, but out of conscience, were thrown out into the street. They were dispersed by everyone in every direction; many security officers were sent to other cities. Two shot themselves on the same day. People did not understand anything ... - what is their fault? Why were they so turned on? But within the sphere of the MGB, of which they were all employees ex officio (such, alas, was the procedure approved by the father himself!), they had to unquestioningly carry out any order of their superiors ...

Then, when Beria himself "fell", they began to restore the residence. They brought things back. They invited former commandants, waitresses - they helped to put everything back in its place and return the house to its former appearance. They were preparing to open a museum here, like Lenin's Gorki. But then the 20th Party Congress followed, after which, of course, the idea of a museum could not come to anyone's mind."

It turns out that almost the first action of Beria upon returning to the Ministry of Internal Affairs was the removal of furniture from Stalin's "near dacha" and the removal of guards and servants from there. Alliluyeva sees the purpose of this in preventing the creation of a house-museum of Stalin in Kuntsevo. It seems that such an action fits into the struggle begun by Beria with the Stalinist cult. But at that time, Stalin's body was already embalmed, and the "four" heirs decided to place it in the Mausoleum, next to Lenin. Was Beria so afraid of the future museum? It's more like something else here. Things were taken out of the dacha to ensure safety, and then placed in a museum, which has not yet been decided where exactly to create it. And that the guards and servants were dispersed, so this is a common thing. Each of Stalin's heirs had his own guards and his own dachas. And, probably, none of them was going to occupy the Kuntsevskaya dacha. Who would want to remember how they trembled before the leader at the Middle Dacha. In the same way, in the future, when the general secretaries changed, the personnel of their guard naturally changed. Rather, the former security guard of the new Secretary General, who still relied on him as an ordinary member of the Politburo, replaced the guard of his predecessor in high office.

His testimony about the behavior of Beria in the last days of his life and during

the time of Stalin's funeral was also left by the leader's son Vasily. Svetlana Alliluyeva writes about her brother: "Vasily was also summoned on March 2, 1953. He also sat for several hours in this large hall full of people, but he was, as usual lately, drunk, and soon left. he still drank, made noise, slandered the doctors, shouted that "they killed his father," "they are killing him" - until he finally left for his place ...

He sat in the country and drank. He didn't need to drink much. After drinking a sip of vodka, he collapsed on the sofa and fell asleep. He was in this state all the time. The death of his father shocked him. He was horrified - he was sure that his father had been "poisoned", "killed"; he saw that the world was collapsing, without which it would be impossible for him to exist.

On the days of the funeral, he was in a terrible state and fanned himself accordingly - he rushed at everyone with reproaches, blamed the government, doctors, everyone who was possible - that they were not treated like that, they were not buried like that ... He lost his idea of the real world, about his place, - he felt like a crown prince ...

He completely lost his head. April 1953 he spent in restaurants, drinking with just anyone, he did not remember what he said. Took everything and everything. He was warned that this could end badly, he didn't give a damn about anything and everyone - he forgot that the times were not the same and that he was no longer the same figure ... After a drinking bout with some foreigners, he was arrested on April 28, 1953.

In fairness, I note that the arrest of the "crown prince" was not a personal initiative of Beria, but a collective decision of the leadership. Stalin's heirs were rather annoyed by the drunken chatter of the Stalinist offspring that his father was "healed" or, worse, simply "killed." Most importantly, it was unbearable for them to realize that there was still one more contender for the inheritance at large, even if only a small part of the population considered Vasily to be the "crown prince" (but in Georgia - much more than throughout the country).

Memoirs Vasily Stalin, as you know, did not write. But in numerous statements from prison to high authorities, he detailed his view of the dramatic events of the spring of 1953 and what preceded them, also on the role of Lavrenty Pavlovich in what was happening. In particular, in a statement to the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU on February 23, 1955, he was in custody. Vasily Stalin wrote: "From what could an opinion about slandering the government be formed? Obviously, from the following statements:

a) The first day of the funeral was poorly organized ... My indignation consisted in the answers to the adjutant Polyansky and Ekaterina Timoshenko (Vasily's wife. - / B. S. /), who bothered me with their stories about calls and outrages allegedly occurring when parting with the father's body . Yes, I resented it out loud. What was it? Insults against the government? No (if we discard Beria). It was an insult for those who, not taking into account everything, allowed not so much horrors as reasons for talking about them. Indignant at the police and Beria, who ensured order. It was a shame for N.S. Khrushchev (since he was the chairman of the commission) (although the chairman of the commission Khrushchev, Beria is still to blame! True, in fairness, it should be noted that by the day of the funeral, Lavrenty Pavlovich was at the head of the united Ministry of Internal Affairs for only a few days and hardly managed to pick up reins of government; this may have been the real reason for the stampede with

a large number of victims during the farewell of the people with the body of Stalin; the new chief could not yet give the necessary orders, and the lower-ranking police chiefs were afraid to take the initiative. - /B. WITH./...

6) Reading a newspaper with the Decree of the Council of Ministers and the Decree of the Supreme Council (on the distribution of posts between successors

Stalin. - /B. S. /), threw a remark: "They couldn't wait until the end of the funeral." A remark, simply stupid, expressed under the impression of loss, and it was hardly worth building a crime on it.

c) On March 9 Square.

At the words of Beria: "Let our enemies not hope for a split," I said: "A thief's hat is on fire." The adjutant Yekaterina Timoshenko and the doctor Martynushkina heard this.

I noticed aloud that Vyacheslav Mikhailovich took off his hat when he spoke, but Beria did not.

He was indignant at the behavior of Beria when bringing the body into the Mausoleum and was simply delighted when Lazar Moiseevich cut him off: "What are you yelling about."

d) Once home, he expressed his opinion that it would be better if N.A. Bulganin, not Beria, since his father was the Minister of Defense, but no one spoke from the Ministry of Defense.

e) After reading "In the Ministry of Internal Affairs" about the released doctors in the Pravda newspaper (meaning the report published on April 4, 1953 about the revision of the so-called "doctors' case" and the release of previously arrested Kremlin doctors. - / Kommersant S. /), I expressed my opinion that this should not have been done (such a statement should be printed), since apart from food for provocateurs and bastards, it did not give anything.

In the same statement, Vasily emphasized in every possible way that if he scolded anyone in the heat of the moment, it was Beria, who fourteen months earlier had been shot as an "enemy of the people." And he argued that he had not loved Lavrenty Pavlovich for a long time: "Here I am obliged to make a reservation about Beria. My mother inspired me with disgust for Beria. She hated him and directly said: "he will bring much evil and misfortune to his father. to some extent, I connect with the influence of Beria on my father. Later, I was affirmed in a bad opinion about this man. I often noticed how he played a "straight-hearted person" in front of his father, and my father, unfortunately, fell for it, believed that Beria was not afraid to tell the "truth". It was impossible to convince my father of this. For the first time, I spoke directly with my father about Beria, telling the incident in the train car upon arrival from Germany to Moscow. Father was sleeping, although we had already arrived at the place, and it was time to leave. I woke up my father Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, Beria was also nearby. Father, awake, not understanding where he was and what was happening, was terribly angry and left alone. I accidentally got into Beria's car, in which Merkulov was also traveling. I told my father about Beria's conversation with Merkulov about this incident, as about the uncleanness of Beria in relation to Vyacheslav Mikhailovich. The last conversation about Beria was in Borjomi. This time, the father, seeing some Georgian "orders" with his own eyes, did not get angry, but thought about it and even remembered: "Nadya could not stand him." I'm forced to reproduce these far from

all conversations with my father, so that it becomes clear why I spoke out so sharply about Beria after my father's death. This is not an accident, but a consistent, more and more assertive opinion that he is a scoundrel. I'm lucky he didn't call me after the arrest. My father once made me repeat my opinion about him in front of him. Beria turned everything into a joke. But he was not such a person to forget, although outwardly he played, especially in front of his father, my patron.

It is difficult to say what is true here, and what was invented by Vasily in an attempt to present his arrest as a consequence of the machinations of Beria and thereby

achieve release and rehabilitation as a victim of the "enemy of the people" exposed by the party. But did Vasily's mother really hate Lavrenty Pavlovich? It is alarming that in the statement of Vasily Iosifovich there are references only to already deceased witnesses - father, mother, Beria, Merkulov. It should be noted that Nadezhda Sergeevna Alliluyeva most likely knew Beria only for the last year or two of her life - after Lavrenty Pavlovich in the 31st headed the party organization of Georgia. It's completely incomprehensible why she managed to hate him so much. And it is absolutely unbelievable that Beria could influence Stalin in terms of provoking a fatal quarrel that led Nadezhda Sergeevna to suicide. Vasily, at the time of his mother's death, was only 11 years old.

The statement about Stalin's allegedly too much trust in Beria is nothing more than a common myth. Iosif Vissarionovich, in principle, did not trust anyone and somehow, in a fit of frankness, admitted to Khrushchev that he did not believe himself. Was it really necessary for the leader to make an exception for Lavrenty Pavlovich? Rather the opposite. In the last months of Stalin's life, Beria felt a clear threat to himself. Both the "doctors' case" and the "Mingrelian case" were directed against him, during which Georgian leaders close to Lavrenty Pavlovich were arrested. It was already symptomatic that among the Soviet leaders, whom the insidious "pestologists" from the Kremlin's Lechsanupra were allegedly going to exterminate, Beria's name was not named. And shortly before Stalin's death, Lavrenty Pavlovich directly told Sergo's son: "Stalin has decided to arrest me and is just waiting for work on the hydrogen bomb to be completed" (Beria headed the hydrogen project). That is why the newly appointed chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not hide his joy at the death of the leader and came up with initiatives for the gradual elimination of the Stalinist cult, which so jarred Vasily.

I also will never believe that Lavrenty Pavlovich was so stupid as to demonstrate patronage to Vasily in front of Joseph Vissarionovich. That would be the right way to the wall. Such arrogance the leader would not forgive anyone.

And the jubilation of Stalin's son over the fact that after Beria's arrest did not call him for interrogation was pure play, and Khrushchev, as well as other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, understood this very well. Indeed, back on August 8, 1953, Kruglov informed Malenkov: "During the last month, Stalin V.I. government." Why would Vasily Iosifovich ask for an appointment with someone whom he had long considered a scoundrel?

And in later statements from prison, Vasily Stalin painted Beria with the blackest colors. So, on September 1, 1958, in a statement to the Prosecutor General's Office, he stated: "Hatred ... for Beria was brought up by my mother. And I was not shy about expressing it in front of my father. could and in any case took revenge.

Beria and Malenkov previously had friendly relations. In the first months after Stalin's death, Lavrenty Pavlovich, with the support of Georgy Maximilianovich, managed to carry out

rehabilitation of those convicted in the "case of doctors", in the case of sabotage in the aviation industry in the 46th year, in the case of employees of the Main Artillery Directorate in the 51st. All these cases were at one time inspired by the opponents of Malenkov and Beria. In a note offering to rehabilitate Air Chief Marshal A.A. Novikova, A.N. Shashurin and other leaders of the aviation industry, Beria pointed out that statements were beaten out from those arrested, in which an attempt was made to "slander Comrade Malenkov." The brother of Lazar Moiseevich Kaganovich Mikhail, the former people's commissar of the aviation industry, who committed suicide after being accused of plotting to establish a fascist government in the USSR, was also rehabilitated!

True, there is evidence that denies the very fact of friendship between Malenkov and Beria. Dissident R.I. Pimenov, who wrote under the pseudonym O. Volin, recalling his meetings with Beria's associates in the Vladimir prison in the 60s, claimed that the former Deputy Minister of the Interior, Colonel-General [1] Stepan Solomonovich Mamulov "clearly knew that his life path he broke down due to the intrigues of Malenkov, whom, like his boss Beria, he always did not like ... Reading from Avtorkhanov in "The Mystery of Stalin's Death" speculation about the alleged union of Malenkov and Beria, I chuckled and recalled the attitude towards Malenkov of Mamulov and other Beriaites From the stories of Mamulov ... it is indisputable for me (however, this is confirmed by many other sources) that in recent years (not months!) Malenkov was in the most hostile relations with Beria. When, after the death of Stalin, Malenkov and Beria suddenly entered the Kremlin corridors in an embrace, smiled at each other, then even six-year-old babies in the Kremlin (as Mamulov joked, recalling a Kremlin anecdote stylized as a child's conversation) it became clear that a major upheaval was about to happen, that this feigned courtesy would be resolved only by the grave of one of them " .

I note that many witnesses speak of the friendship between Malenkov and Beria, and long before Stalin's death, including Khrushchev in his memoirs. On the contrary, contrary to Pimenov's opinion, there is only one evidence of their long-standing enmity Mamulovau Of course, the friendship of Lavrenty Pavlovich and Georgy Maksimilianovich was a marriage of convenience, and both party leaders did not experience particularly warm feelings for each other. Beria's inner circle was probably aware of this. However, one cannot discount the fact that Stepan Solomonovich, as well as other Beriaites who miraculously survived, was greatly influenced by the upheavals of the 53rd, including the betrayal of "friend Georgy." Knowing what role Malenkov played in the massacre of Beria, Mashmulov could, willingly or unwittingly, transfer the hostility of Malenkov and Beria into the past.

Literally immediately after the appointment of Beria as head of the new united Ministry of Internal Affairs, denunciations rained down on him to the Presidium of the Central Committee. Here is just an example of one of them:

"Comrades Khrushchev and Malenkov!

Pay attention to the cunning Mingrelian Beria. He is a vile swindler, a nationalist. No one exists for him except the Mingrelian. He sent Kakuchan[2] to the Ministry of Internal Affairs as a deputy - a 90-year-old fart Tsereteli, [3] an illiterate, ignorant kulak, but

tail Beria L.P. liberated the enemies of the people - the Mingrelians after the death of Stalin. The Mingrelians say that if Stalin were alive, Beria could not let the Mingrelians go. Now all our Russians cannot turn a stick without Beria, he sat on the head of the Russians. The uncle of Beria's wife - Isidor Gegechkori - thunders in America, the Menshevik, and many relatives. Beria, a swindler, will now suit all Mingrelians. Rukhadze[4] is not an enemy of the people, he had rich material on Beria, and for that they destroyed materials on him. Interrogate Rukhadze yourself, send Russians to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, we do not want Mingrelian swindlers led by Beria. Delete him to hell with your Mingrelians. We love Russian, fair people. Now the life of Georgians is not worth a penny. In large places there will be Mingrelians, and the rest will suffer. Check for yourself, all the Mingrelians will be in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Beria will kill you if you don't remove him. Don't look for me, you won't find me."

Judging by the time of Kakuchai's tenure as the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, this anonymous letter arrived in Moscow at the end of March or at the beginning of April. It in itself testifies how difficult the position of Beria and his henchmen in the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was, where they were opposed by close-knit groups of henchmen Ignatiev and Abakumov. Khrushchev and Malenkov, apparently, did not look for the anonymous author, but they followed the advice of an unknown well-wisher from the ranks of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs and removed Lavrenty Pavlovich not only from the leadership of the Union Ministry of Internal Affairs, but also from life too. However, before that, perhaps, demonstrating collective leadership in action, they familiarized Beria himself with the text of the denunciation, which led to the replacement of Kakuchava by Dekanozov. And Georgy Maksimilianovich and Nikita Sergeevich kept the anonymous letter itself. It came in handy when they needed to prove Beria's intention to use the organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs as a tool for the struggle for power. In addition, there was a hint of Beria's connection with the Georgians with the Mensheviks, which also came in handy for accusing Beria of "bourgeois degeneration."

Lavrenty Pavlovich was also blamed for the initiative to return Menshevik emigrants to Georgia. On his initiative, at the beginning of 1945, Sharia went to Paris to negotiate with Georgian emigrants on their recognition of Soviet power, as well as on the return of museum valuables that they had taken out of Georgia. Among Sharia's partners in the negotiations was the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Menshevik government of Georgia, E.P. Gegechkori, a distant relative of Beria's wife. A year later, these negotiations were continued by I. Tavadze, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. As a result, on May 26, 1947, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, at the suggestion of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, adopted a resolution "On the return of Georgian emigrants from France", allowing 59 emigrants to return to the USSR.

It would be tempting to see here the beginning of Beria's principled line of reaching an agreement with nationalist circles in the republics. In 1953, it was expressed in Beria's attempts to reach some kind of consensus with the Ukrainian and Baltic nationalists. At the July plenum of 1953, the head of the government of Georgia, V.M. Bakradze argued: "All this fuss that Beria started with the Georgian Menshevik emigration ... I was always against it with my soul. I then told Charkviani (first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

Georgia in 1938-1952. - /B. S./): "Listen, drop this bandit rabble, who needs them in Georgia." They are busy with the Menshevik Georgian emigration in order to bring them here. It seems to me that in the light of today's facts and what has become clear about Beria, this idea is not accidental.

However, it is unlikely that in reality the steps to repatriate the Georgian Mensheviks were Beria's personal initiative. Then, at the end of the war and in the first post-war years, the line on the return of emigrants was part of Stalin's policy. It was intended to demonstrate to the whole world that, under the impression of the achievements of the Soviet people who won the Great Patriotic War, even the former sworn enemies of the Soviet government are ready to return to their homeland, whom she, in turn, is ready to forgive. And negotiations on the return were conducted not only with Georgian emigrants, but also with Russian, Armenian, Ukrainian ... The same Konstantin Simonov, during his trip to Paris, for example, unsuccessfully tried to persuade Nobel laureate Ivan Bunin to return.

Shortly after joining the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on April 4, 1953, Beria issued an order "On the prohibition of the use of any measures of coercion and physical influence on those arrested." There, in particular, it was said:

"According to the instructions of the leadership of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR, beatings were carried out in premises equipped for this purpose in Lefortovo and internal prisons and were entrusted to a special group of specially designated persons ... using all kinds of instruments of torture.

Such savage "interrogation methods" led to the fact that many of the innocently arrested were brought by investigators to a state of decline in physical strength, moral depression, and some of them to the loss of human appearance.

Taking advantage of this state of the arrested, the falsifying investigators slipped them pre-fabricated "confessions" about anti-Soviet and espionage-terrorist work.

Such vicious methods of conducting an investigation directed the efforts of the operational staff on a false path, and the attention of the state security organs was diverted from the fight against the real enemies of the Soviet state.

Beria demanded:

"To categorically prohibit the use of any measures of coercion and physical coercion in the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs ...

To liquidate in the Lefortovo and internal prisons the premises organized by the leadership of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR for the use of physical measures of influence on the arrested, and to destroy all the instruments through which torture was carried out.

To acquaint the entire operational staff of the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with this order and warn that henceforth, for violation of Soviet legality, not only the direct perpetrators, but also their leaders will be held to the strictest responsibility, up to trial.

As we well remember, in the 1930s Lavrenty Pavlovich himself used "vicious methods of investigation" with might and main in both Georgia and Moscow. And then such a metamorphosis. How to explain it. I think it's natural

pragmatism of Lavrenty Pavlovich, and even, strange as it may seem, fear for one's own skin.

An experienced professional, Beria was well aware that torture of persons under investigation makes sense only in two cases. Firstly, if through measures of physical and psychological pressure it is possible to obtain information from the arrested person that can be objectively verified, such as: the location of the hiding place, if the bank account number, etc. And, secondly, when the investigator knows that the charges against the person under investigation are fictitious, and only with a fist or a truncheon, torture with a refrigerator cell or sleep deprivation can one get a confession from them. The second option was the most common in the practice of the NKVD-MGB from the second half of the 30s and up to the beginning of the 50s.

Lavrenty Pavlovich reasoned quite sensibly: if you have to stab real enemies suspected of espionage or conspiracy or other crimes, beat appearances, passwords, hiding places out of them, then security officers and policemen will still do this, despite any orders, and without any prosecutors - even when the suspect is considered not yet arrested, but only detained. But at the same time, Beria sincerely believed that there would be no more falsified political trials. He thought that with the death of Stalin, members of the top political leadership would be guaranteed that, due to disagreements and disputes, they would only be removed from their posts, but not arrested or shot. Beria hoped that, having survived under Stalin, in the last months of whose life he could expect arrest every day, he would now live a long time. But he miscalculated. Comrades in the Presidium of the Central Committee preferred to bring Lavrenty Pavlovich as the last victim, so that later, in the event of resignation, they would replace their bullet with a personal pension. Lavrenty Pavlovich was the last member of the Politburo to be convicted in a political trial. In the future, no members of the "anti-party group" Molotov, Kaganovich and Malenkov, who unsuccessfully opposed Khrushchev, were shot. They did not shoot Khrushchev himself, against whom this time Brezhnev, Kosygin, Suslov and other members of the Politburo spoke very successfully. The only thing that helped Lavrenty Pavlovich after his arrest from his own innovations was just the order not to use physical measures against those arrested. There is no evidence that Beria was beaten. But this was hardly caused by the reverent attitude of the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee to the order of their defeated colleague. Just knock out a confession from Beria

there was no need to organize a conspiracy that never existed. The process was supposed to be closed from the very beginning (even at the plenum where he was defamed, Beria, unlike Bukharin and Rykov in 1937, was not allowed to attend), and there is no certainty that Lavrenty Pavlovich actually lived to see it begin.

After his appointment as head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Beria became concerned about the fate of Abakumov.
[5]

On September 7, 1953, during interrogation, the former deputy head of the Investigative Department for special

important affairs of the MGB, Colonel Konyakhin, a former employee of the Central Committee, taken to the organs by Minister Ignatiev:

"On March 11-12, 1953, I was at the report of the minister (Beria. - / S. /) and, when the turn came to the Abakumov case, Beria, without asking about Abakumov's guilt, ironically said: "Well, what else did they find at Abakumov, except for his apartment and junk?" I replied that the facts of deception of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks were confirmed and, in addition to this, Abakumov did nothing at the request of the doctor Timashuk in revealing the circumstances of the death of Comrade Zhdanov. Beria immediately attacked me: "How did Abakumov do nothing on Timashuk's statement? Do you know that Abakumov conveyed this statement to Stalin? Why are you deceiving me? Have you been taught in the Central Committee to deceive the leadership?"

I kept silent and, in particular, did not tell Beria about Comrade Stalin's remark, which he made in my presence on February 20, 1953, namely: "It was Beria who slipped Abakumov on us ... I don't like Beria, he doesn't know how to select personnel, trying to put his people everywhere ... "

It turns out that in the last days of his life, the leader considered the possibility of attaching Lavrenty Pavlovich Abakumov to the case. Probably, Stalin was stopped only by the role played by Beria in the atomic and hydrogen projects. Before the first Soviet hydrogen bomb was detonated, it was risky to change horses at the crossing. The stroke put an end to Stalin's hesitation. Perhaps Koba, if he had remained alive then, would still not have dared to arrest the loaf Lavrenty, considering that it was not yet time.

Malenkov and Beria decided to incriminate Abakumov not only in the case of doctors, all of whom were rehabilitated in April at the initiative of Beria, but also in the aviation case of 1946, where the rehabilitation was initiated by Malenkov, who in 1946 paid for the acceptance of defective aircraft and aircraft engines with a short-term resignation from the posts of secretary Central Committee and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and a reference to work in Central Asia. Molotov demanded to add here the falsification of his wife's case - P.S. Pearl.

Already after the arrest of Beria during interrogations, Abakumov denied having close ties with Beria: "I have never been to Beria's apartment and dacha. Our relations were purely official, official and nothing else." This did not prevent prosecutor Rudenko at his trial in 1954 from declaring him a member of the "Beria gang". Since then, Abakumov and Beria have often been remembered together as members of the same gang, one conspiracy with

purpose of seizing power. Nothing could be further from reality: Viktor Semenovitch and Lavrenty Pavlovich could not stand each other since the war.

Beria offered to rehabilitate the members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. He established that the famous director Solomon Mikhoels did not die under the wheels of a truck in Minsk in 1948, but, together with the critic V.I. Golubov-Potapov was killed by officers of the MGB on the orders of the then Minister of State Security V.S. Abakumov, who undoubtedly acted on behalf of Stalin. Beria proposed to the Presidium of the Central Committee to deprive the participants in the murder of the orders received for this crime and put them on trial. The head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs arrested L.F. Tsanava as Minister of State Security

Belarus, who directly organized the assassination attempt on Mikhoels. Already after the fall of Beria, the Presidium limited itself to taking the orders from the killers. Tsanava died during the investigation, which already accused him ... of participating in Beria's conspiracy!

Lavrenty Pavlovich proposed a broad amnesty for prisoners. This proposal was accepted by the Presidium of the Central Committee. On March 27, 1953, a decree was issued, signed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR K.E. Voroshilov, so the people called the amnesty of 1953 "Voroshilov". Of the 2,526,402 prisoners and those under investigation who were at that time in prisons and camps, 1,181,264 people were to be released, not representing a special public danger. These included persons sentenced to a term of 5 years or less, sentenced to a longer term for official, economic and military crimes, elderly and sick prisoners, pregnant women and women with children under the age of 10, as well as minors. Beria proposed an even broader amnesty that would have affected most political prisoners (they usually had a term of at least 8 years), but colleagues on the Presidium of the Central Committee did not support him. At the same time, Lavrenty Pavlovich achieved the abolition of restrictions on registration in most cities and border areas. In addition to the closed military-industrial cities, Moscow, Leningrad, Vladivostok, Sevastopol and Kronstadt remained restricted. This was done so that the amnestied returned to their homes and could more easily adapt to life in the wild. Beria emphasized: "The established restrictions on the share of free movement and residence on the territory of the USSR cause fair criticism from citizens. It should be noted that such a practice of passport restrictions does not exist in any country. In many capitalist countries - the USA, England, Canada, Finland and Sweden "People don't have passports at all, and there are no records of a criminal record in citizens' personal documents." After Beria's arrest, restrictions on propiska were restored without much fuss.

Of course, being in prison does not make anyone better, and many harmless bytoviki or those convicted under the infamous "seven-eight" law (dated August 7, 1932) for picking up collective-farm spikelets acquired quite criminal inclinations in the camps. And Beria had to respond to complaints from the localities about the atrocities of the amnestied. So, on May 21, 1953, he wrote to the department of internal affairs of the Krasnodar Territory: "... In the city of Kropotkin there are many cases of banditry, theft and other criminal manifestations,

as a result, local residents are afraid to walk around the city at a later time. Take the necessary measures to strengthen the fight against criminal crime and the protection of public order in the city of Kropotkin. Report the results."

Letters from workers, outraged by the atrocities of the amnestied, came to other leaders of the country. So, on May 11, 1953, a Muscovite Antonova wrote to Molotov:

"Dear Vyacheslav Mikhailovich"

Forgive me for the impudence that I allowed myself, deciding to write to you, I have no strength to be silent anymore. I ask you to protect us ordinary people from

persecution and terror of thieves. They rob in broad daylight, walk around with daggers, razors, and if someone resists them, they use them, so the conductor Grigorieva A.A. was cut. from Krasnaya Presnya. You go home from work and you don't know if you will get there safely. The police are powerless when you call for help, for example, in a carriage or train, all passengers are silent, they are afraid to utter a word. What is it? In Moscow, such disgrace, horror, not to mention the Moscow region, there is the kingdom of bandits, especially nested in Nikitovka and Obiralovka - Art. Zheleznodorozhnaya Gorky Railway d.

After all, this is muddy water, these are Russian "gangsters" without conscience and honor.

We defeated Germany, armed to the teeth, is our state really powerless to defeat these parasites.

We ask you to issue a law, to cut off 5 fingers of the left hand to the caught thief, to brand them so that the people know that these thieves were wary of him. Ruthless and harsh measures must be taken. Enough to be humane with this weed. The humpback will be corrected by the grave. Honest workers must finally find peace and not be afraid that they will come home safely.

Gather representatives from the conductors, for example, from Krasnaya Presnya, they will tell you a lot. This situation cannot be tolerated any longer."

Soon Molotov, Malenkov and Khrushchev directed this legitimate discontent against Beria, attributing to him all the excesses of the amnesty that had just been announced.

Beria had long understood the inefficiency of forced labor by prisoners and tried to unload the Gulag. New complex types of weapons required skilled labor. Simultaneously with the amnesty, on March 21, Beria sent a proposal to close more than 20 large construction sites, which mainly employed prisoners. Work was stopped on the main Turkmen canal, the Volga Ural canal, on the hydroelectric facilities on the Lower Don, on the Chum - Salekhard - Igarka and BAM railways, etc. All these projects were economically inefficient and harmful from the point of view of the environment.

But Lavrenty Pavlovich was plotting even more global reforms. Fearing that centrifugal tendencies could destroy the Soviet Union in the long run, he offered to at least partially satisfy the national feelings of the inhabitants of the republics. by design

Beria, the leaders of the Communist parties and the main departments were to be representatives of the indigenous nationality. It was supposed to form national armies, establish national orders (for example, in Georgia - Shota Rustaveli, in Ukraine - Taras Shevchenko, in Azerbaijan - Abu Mohammed Nizami, etc.), translate office work into national languages, and pay more attention to national intelligentsia. The experience of the war convinced Lavrenty Pavlovich that not all Soviet peoples were ready to go into battle "For the Motherland, for Stalin!" His son, who visited Western Ukraine, confirmed that the inhabitants of the newly annexed territories are by no means happy with their entry into the "family of fraternal peoples." Sergo Lavrentievich recalled: "It was there (in Ukraine. - /y. S./) that I learned what an insurrectionary movement is in our rear ... Cruelty gave rise to cruelty. I remember how one of the nationalist detachments stormed the frontier post, where they were detained people When

the Soviet unit came to the rescue, there was already no one to save - all the personnel were cut out ... When the front went west, to fight the rebels ... they dressed up our soldiers and passed off such units as Bandera detachments ...

The captured insurgents made a very strong impression on me. Many of them were my peers. Competent, self-righteous young people. Often there were students among them... When I told my father about what he saw in Western Ukraine, he reacted like this: "Why are you surprised? These people are fighting for an independent Ukraine. It was the same in Georgia, and it can be in any other place. You can't call them to your side with weapons ... ""

According to the memoirs of Sergo Beria, his father "believed that the Union should be united, and did not believe in the existence of autonomies. Another thing is that the republics that are part of the same Union should have immeasurably greater rights than it was then.

"One way or another, the republics must join some camp," my father said. - From the point of view of historical roots, for Georgia it is an alliance with Russia, because the entire thousand-year history of Georgia is the struggle of our people for survival. The Treaty of Georgievsk was adopted long before the Sovietization of Georgia, and this policy must be continued. After all, we are connected by a single faith and a single culture. We just need to resolutely abandon the methods inherent in the tsarist regime, and not suppress the language, not replace national cadres with officials of Russian origin.

Lavrenty Pavlovich hoped to lure peoples with the opportunity to preserve and develop national languages and cultures, serve in the national army, obey fellow tribesmen, and not people sent from Moscow. He hoped to attract the national elites to the side of the center, giving them real power in the republics. Indeed, until 1953, in the republics of Central Asia, in the Baltic states, Moldova and Belarus, Russians sharply prevailed in all more or less significant administrative posts, up to the district policemen. In other republics, their share in leadership positions was significantly higher than the share of Russians in the population of the respective territories.

At the same time, under Beria, the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs continued to actively fight against anti-Soviet rebels in Lithuania and Western Ukraine - with

Lithuanian Liberation Army and Ukrainian Insurgent Army. And just during the three-month "second coming" of Beria, great luck smiled at the Chekists. As a result of a joint operation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Lithuanian SSR and the 4th Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR, on May 30, 1953, the leader of the Lithuanian rebels, Captain Li Zemaitis, was captured, elected by the "forest brothers" and supporting them underground in 1949 as chairman of the presidium of the "Union of Struggle for the Liberation of Lithuania". Here is how the head of the Lithuanian communists Antanas Sneckkus outlined the story of the detention of Zemaitis at the July plenum dedicated to exposing the "Beria plot":

"Lithuania acquired notoriety in connection with Beria's provocative note in the ninth year of the existence of Soviet power after liberation from the Nazi invaders. Now it is clear to us why Beria needed to inflate the significance of the bourgeois-nationalist underground in Lithuania. This was done in order to use our

shortcomings in work, to inflate these shortcomings and show oneself as the savior of Soviet power in Lithuania, so that everyone, reading a provocative note, would think about what kind of order there is in Lithuania with so many years of existence of Soviet power ...

Beria also incredibly inflated the reactionary influence of the Catholic Church, saying that 90 percent of believers are among the population of Lithuania (for decades there have been persistent rumors in Lithuania that Sneckkus himself secretly visits the church. - / Kommersant S. /). Ninety percent! Meanwhile, the Catholic Church could have desired such a percentage in the best bourgeois times. Needless to say, the struggle of the Lithuanian people against the Lithuanian bourgeois nationalists and their social support, the kulaks, was severe and difficult. We have won this fight. But we must not forget that the Lithuanian bourgeois nationalists armed themselves with the Germans to fight the Soviet power, and then they were actively supported by the American imperialists ... In this struggle, we lost more than 13 thousand poor peasants, farm laborers and partly Soviet party activists. But this struggle, under the leadership of the Central Committee, was basically carried through to the end. This year we have only 7 killed... The bourgeois nationalists themselves admit that they have lost the fight. By the way, the note mentioned that the underground was led by the captain of the Lithuanian bourgeois army Zemaitis, who had been elected president of Lithuania. So they called him the President of Lithuania. That the captain of the bourgeois Lithuanian army Zemaitis was not caught until recently is our fault. What was Zemaitis talking about when we recently caught him, and without the help of Beria, but the Lithuanian Chekists caught him (here Sneckkus was deliberately cunning; after all, the operation was joint with the Moscow Chekists; I don't know if Lavrenty Pavlovich personally developed it, but for sure he kept the course of the operation under control, however, at the plenum, no Beria merits could be recognized. - / B. S. /).

Bulganin: And he attributed this to himself (and, perhaps, not without reason. - /B.S./).

Sneckkus: The same Zemaitis as his popularizer Beria. He showed that he did not leave the forest, that he had several points for contacts, that he did not have any popularity. What does Beria do? He orders Zemaitis to be brought to Moscow for personal interrogation...

Malenkov: Did he interrogate him?

Snapkus: Yes. He was brought by the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Martavičius. He told me something today... After the interrogation of Zemaitis, Beria makes such an offer in order to create an underground nationalist organization with the help of Zemaitis. First, he inflated Zemaitis, and now he is making an offer to the same Martavičius to create a nationalist organization with the help of Zemaitis.

Is this not another provocation by Beria about the nationalist underground in Lithuania.

By the way, how Beria tried to help the cause of the liquidation of the nationalist underground in Lithuania. After the meeting of the Presidium, I came to Beria for a personal conversation. That was the only conversation (Laughter).

Pervukhin: Did he call you?

Snechkus: No, I called myself and said that I would like to talk to him. He said what do you want? I told him that I would like to talk. Comrade Gedvilas, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, also attended this personal conversation.

Malenkov: He hid from the Central Committee that you were with him.

Snechkus: And now you can find out everything.

Khrushchev: Beria sought to summon the secretaries of the Central Committee and regional committees to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Snechkus: By the way, I did not use such benefits.

Khrushchev: Even those whom he summoned cannot say.

Sniežkus: I raised the question in this personal conversation about the need to block all broadcasts of enemy stations that are in Lithuanian, and at least six broadcasts are broadcast in Lithuanian, and the population in Lithuania can listen, receive radio transmitters. What did he answer to this - that he, you see, is preparing proposals to eliminate in general none of the blockage that now exists. Bad blockage, and he wants to eliminate that one. So what kind of help is this in liquidating the bourgeois-nationalist underground? And over the radio and installations, the American imperialists are transmitting to the still existing bourgeois nationalist RAIL.

How was Beria's note compiled? What I knew a little earlier, and last night the Deputy Minister of the Interior Martavičius told me... It was forbidden to speak. How was this note written? It was not Sharia who made it up... it was made up mainly by another magician in a general's uniform, Sazykin. This Sazykin snooped around Lithuania, was in Lithuania twice, but did not go to the Central Committee, and the Central Committee did not even know that he was in Lithuania incognito. For more weight, they started a rumor that he is also an atomic scientist (Laughter). Comrades from the Lithuanian Ministry of Internal Affairs at first objected to many of the provisions in Beria's note, but were then forced to sign the document after being rude to my mother. Comrade Martavičius - Deputy Minister of the Interior

Lithuanian USSR - writes like this: "The memorandum compiled by us - Kondakov, Martavichyus - communists with underground experience, Gailzevicius - a Lithuanian communist, was a very self-critical memorandum, but Beria did not satisfy it. He accused us of hiding the real situation in Lithuania, although the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lithuania did not even allow this in their thoughts. Beria cursed us with the basest abuse and forced us to remake us in the spirit that pleased him, that is, to inflate the state of the operating underground and show them as massive, harmoniously organized and centralized, outside our field of vision. underground, we don't have such a situation in our republic, but we were forced to repel such an underground, as Beria wanted. To my objections, Beria against this biased assessment of the situation, he attacked me with abuse and threats. So this note was drawn up "...

Yes, by the way, about the number. A large figure is given there - 270 thousand of all repressed, but it was compiled dishonestly ... there, in the note, it is indicated, since 1944, and meanwhile, those who were repressed before the war, 1941, are included ... there, apparently, several times that the same person passes. And this figure has now begun to circulate in our republic, it was announced at the Plenum.

Why did Beria need to inflate the situation in Lithuania so much? Apparently the Americans. We must recall, comrades, Eisenhower's speech last autumn, when he said that the Americans were determined to free their blood brothers... Apparently, it was necessary to inflate this existence of a bourgeois-nationalist underground, then bring it to the attention of the population, and to the press horrible...

Comrade Khrushchev and Comrade Molotov rightly said here that the bourgeois-nationalist elements began to loosen their belts ... after the most harmful rapid replacement of Russians by Lithuanians in the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. And here Beria pursued the goal of showing himself as a conductor of national policy, belittling the authority of the Central Committee.

What is the nature of these rumors? The Russians will be expelled from Lithuania, and the expelled kulaks will return to Lithuania, and the Lithuanian communists will be expelled for the Russians. We will kill these Lithuanian communists like rabbits. All Russians are already being fired, in general they are fleeing from Lithuania. Only Lithuanians and some Russians will remain in the militia and other institutions, but let them not hope that they will have freedom there. We'll catch them all like rabbits. The Russian Communists are leaving Lithuania, and the Lithuanian Communists will be hanged when the Americans and the British arrive. The Russian communists will leave, and we will kill all the Lithuanians. This is how the bourgeois-nationalist elements are unleashed."

It is difficult to say what kind of organization, headed by Captain Zhemaitis, Beria was going to create. Whether it was about an imaginary anti-Soviet organization, like the notorious "Trust" of the 20s, designed to catch emigrant emissaries and leaders of the real Lithuanian underground. Either Lavrenty Pavlovich planned to create a legal national-cultural organization in order to split the underground and win over a part of the "bourgeois nationalists". If the last assumption is correct, then it turns out that Beria was ready to go for a wide bloc with supporters of Lithuanian independence, probably on the terms of providing

Republic of real autonomy and the inclusion of some opposition figures in the government. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the intention to carry out an accelerated replacement of Russian personnel in Lithuania with national ones. For such an event, there simply would not have been a sufficient number of Lithuanians loyal to the Soviet government with an appropriate level of education. And Beria could not but know the mood in Lithuania, especially since he himself emphasized the strength of the "bourgeois nationalists" in every possible way. It was no coincidence that Lavrenty Pavlovich was going to gradually deprive the local party bodies of real power. Apparently, he hoped to reach an agreement with the supporters of an independent Lithuania not on an ideological, but on an economic platform, convincing them of the benefits of joining a larger state, and besides, one of the two superpowers that existed in the world. At the same time, Beria was ready to abandon both the collective farms and the "ideological purity" of the economy.

The resolution of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the situation in the Lithuanian SSR, adopted on May 26, 1953, according to a note by Beria (the text of the note has not yet been published), noted "a gross distortion by the party and Soviet leadership of Lithuania of the Leninist-Stalinist national policy ... Of the four Vice-Chairmen Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR, only one is Lithuanian, in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

In Lithuania, out of 15 heads of departments, only 7 Lithuanians, in the Vilnius Regional Committee, out of 16 heads of departments and sectors, only 3 Lithuanians, in the apparatus of the Kaunas City Committee, out of 8 heads of departments, only one Lithuanian ... In the apparatus of the former. The Ministry of State Security of the Lithuanian SSR included only one Lithuanian among the 17 heads of departments, out of 87 heads of the MGB regional departments there were only 9 Lithuanians, and out of 85 heads of the regional police departments - only 10 Lithuanians.

Even among the leading economic workers, Lithuanians are a minority. So, out of 92 directors of state farms, only 27 Lithuanians, out of 132 directors of MTS, only 53 Lithuanians.

The resolution also emphasized that "the party organization of Lithuania did not sufficiently take into account the danger of the widespread influence of the Catholic clergy, hostile to the Soviet regime, among the Lithuanian population. the use of repressions against the Catholic clergy, which further fueled the dissatisfaction of the population with the measures of the Soviet government.

Obviously, Lavrenty Pavlovich hoped to repeat in Lithuania the successful experience he had done first with the Georgian, and then, together with Stalin, with the Russian Orthodox Church, when instead of repressions, people under the protection of state security were brought to the leadership of the churches.

Also, clearly at the suggestion of Beria, the resolution stated: "Only serious mistakes and weaknesses in the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania and the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR can explain the fact that the bourgeois-nationalist underground not only has not been liquidated so far, but has managed to put down deep roots and even create for itself some support in the bowels of the population itself. The main mistake in this area should be recognized that the party and Soviet leadership of Lithuania

actually entrusted the important task of liquidating the bourgeois-nationalist underground to the state security agencies, and they, in turn, basically reduced this matter to mass repressions and Chekist-military operations that affected broad layers

population.

During the post-war period (1944-1952), more than 270 thousand people, i.e., about 10% of the total population, were subjected to various types of repression. The Central Committee of the CPSU considers it a disgraceful fact that the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR have so far failed to decapitate the anti-Soviet underground, which is doing great harm to the Lithuanian people. Not only were the leaders of the underground centers not caught, but their active measures against Soviet power were not suppressed either. Until now, underground printing houses continue to operate, printing anti-Soviet newspapers, leaflets and pamphlets in large circulation, directed against the interests of the Lithuanian people. Things come to the point that in order to provide for the members of the underground, the leaders of this underground manage to collect various kinds of requisitions from a certain part of the rural population and even from individual collective farms.

The Central Committee of the CPSU emphasizes that unless effective measures are taken immediately to eliminate the above-mentioned serious

shortcomings and failures in the work of the party and Soviet organizations of the Lithuanian SSR, the cause of Soviet power in the republic may be jeopardized.

Lavrenty Pavlovich in the last years of his life was already very well aware that mass repressions could not solve the problem of rejection of communist power in conditions when people's resistance to it had already arisen with weapons in their hands. Repressions, at best, dealt a blow only to the accomplices of the rebels, and not to the members of the armed formations themselves. Most often, random people who had nothing to do with the underground suffered from KGB military operations and other mass repressions, and this only embittered the population. Beria seemed much more effective policy of carrots and sticks. It emphasized promises and concessions to the insurgents and a presentation of the movement from within. The repressions were supposed to be selective and affect primarily the leaders of the insurgent movement.

The main requirement of the decision of the Presidium of the Central Committee for Lithuania, written in fact under the dictation of Beria, was that it was necessary to "cultivate and widely promote Lithuanian cadres to all levels of the party, Soviet and economic leadership." At the same time, it was supposed to abandon the practice of "appointing deputy chairmen of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR and nominating second secretaries of district and city party committees", as well as in other power structures of persons "not from Lithuanian national cadres."

At the initiative of Beria, similar resolutions were adopted for Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. The latter has not yet been published to date. Since there was no longer an armed struggle in Western Belarus, it can be assumed that it only mentioned a lack of attention to national culture and the absence of local natives in leadership positions.

As for the resolution on Western Ukraine, adopted on the same day as the resolution on Lithuania, on May 26, 1953, it directly stated: "Weak work of local party and Soviet bodies, as well as insufficient leadership on the part of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine led to the fact that among a significant part of the population there is dissatisfaction with the activities carried out on the spot ...

The serious dissatisfaction of the population of the western regions of Ukraine is caused by the facts of gross distortion of the Lenin-Stalin national policy that are available there. In the leading Soviet party activists, cadres of workers from Western Ukrainians make up an insignificant part, and almost all leading positions in the party and Soviet bodies are occupied by workers sent from the eastern regions of the Ukrainian SSR and from other republics of the Soviet Union. So, for example, out of 311 leading officials of the regional, city and district party bodies of the western regions of Ukraine, only 18 people are from the western Ukrainian population.

The indiscriminate distrust of local cadres from among the intelligentsia is especially painfully perceived by the population of Western Ukraine ... Of the 1718 professors and teachers of 12 higher educational institutions in the city of Lviv, only 320 people belong to the Western Ukrainian intelligentsia, there are no directors of these educational institutions

not a single native of Western Ukraine, and among the 25 deputy directors, only one is a Western Ukrainian.

It is necessary to recognize as an abnormal phenomenon the teaching of the overwhelming majority of disciplines in higher educational institutions of Western Ukraine in Russian... At the Lviv Institute of Trade and Economics, all 56 disciplines are taught in Russian, and at the Forestry Institute, out of 41 disciplines, only four are taught in Russian...

This state of affairs in the western regions of the Ukraine creates the ground for the subversive work of the enemies of Soviet power, especially the bourgeois-nationalist underground. The facts show that this underground, despite many years of struggle to eliminate it, still continues to exist, and its gangs continue to terrorize the population.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the regional party committees of the western regions still cannot take into account that the fight against the nationalist underground cannot be carried out only through mass repressions and Chekist military operations, that the senseless use of repressions only causes discontent among the population and harms the fight against bourgeois nationalists.

From 1944 to 1952, up to 500 thousand people were subjected to various types of repression in the western regions of Ukraine, including more than 134 thousand people were arrested, more than 153 thousand people were killed, [6] more than 203 thousand people were deported forever from the Ukrainian SSR. [7]

The obvious unsatisfactoriness of the measures being taken to combat the bourgeois-nationalist underground is evidenced by the fact that about 8,000 young people who are to be recruited into vocational schools and schools of the FZO have gone into an illegal position.

On February 8, 1948, First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs I.A. Serov. This letter appeared in connection with Abakumov's attempts to create a case against Serov for misappropriation of funds in Germany and the arrest by the Ministry of State Security of Interior Ministry officers who worked in Berlin. Among other things, Ivan Alexandrovich informed Stalin that "in the internal troops transferred from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the MGB, officers are forbidden to recall the operations carried out during the war (on the resettlement of Germans, Karachays, Chechen-Ingush, Kalmyks, etc.). One can only scold these. After all, the autumn operation of the MGB against Ukrainian nationalists was known to the nationalists ten days before the start, and many of them disappeared (we are talking about the mass deportation of the population of Western Ukraine in 1947. - /B.S./). And Abakumov presented hundreds of employees for awards for the operation.

The resolution of the Central Committee of the Presidium of the Central Committee for Western Ukraine proposed to replace the head of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the Russian L.G. Melnikov to the second secretary - Ukrainian A.I. Kirichenko, which was carried out. However, subsequently Kirichenko firmly held the side of Khrushchev, so that Beria did not receive any benefit from this appointment. It was also proposed to increase the proportion of immigrants from Western Ukraine in the party and Soviet bodies, both at the local and at the all-Ukrainian level. This was not even mentioned after Beria's arrest. More fortunate point about the introduction in universities and schools

Western Ukraine teaching in Ukrainian. He, albeit partially, but was implemented.

Beria also insisted that measures be taken to improve the economic situation in Western Ukraine. The resolution noted: "To recognize it as necessary, in order to further strengthen the collective farms, develop their social economy and improve the material well-being of the collective farm peasantry of the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR, to reduce the norms for state supplies of agricultural products and mandatory cash payments, primarily for collective farms in mountainous and foothill areas". Already after the arrest of the chief of the united Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the fall of 53, these measures were extended to the whole country. Later, both Khrushchev and Malenkov each attributed to themselves the idea of lightening the burden of the peasantry. But it turns out that the collective farmers should thank Beria for this, who was the first to propose to stop tearing three skins from the collective farms.

It is interesting that in the last days of Beria's tenure at the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on June 22, 1953, the Chekists managed to arrest one of the leaders of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, whose military wing was not the UPA, the over-district guide Roman Shchepansky (Bui-Tur). Obviously, he was intended for the same combination as Zemaitis (Schepansky was never shot).

It is possible that Beria deliberately exaggerated about the situation in the Baltic states and Western Ukraine. This is what he was accused of after his arrest, already at the July plenum. Perhaps Lavrenty Pavlovich sincerely believed that only the transformation of the USSR into a real federation, with more independent union republics, headed by national personnel and with office work in national languages, would allow maintaining a unified

state. And for the sake of such a transformation, he frightened his colleagues in the Presidium of the Central Committee with "horror stories" about the power of the nationalist Ukrainian and Lithuanian underground. It is possible, of course, to assume otherwise. Lavrenty Pavlovich, having not been in touch with the security agencies for several years, lost his Chekist instinct and was unable to correctly assess the situation in Lithuania and Western Ukraine. But it's hard to believe this. After all, Lavrenty Pavlovich, which is characteristic, did not say anything about the powerful nationalist underground in Western Belarus, Latvia and Estonia, where the armed struggle against Soviet power had already ceased two or three years ago. Could he really not have imagined that sooner or later the struggle of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian rebels would end the same way. Yes, he probably guessed that the days of the LOA and the UPA were numbered! The rebels had almost no connections with foreign countries. At best, messengers came from there with obscure directives, but not weapons. Ammunition left over from the battles of the Second World War, with which the "forest brothers" and Bandera fought against the Red Army and the troops of the MGB, by 1953 had almost dried up. The hopes of the rebels that the "cold war" would sooner or later develop into a "hot" war turned out to be illusory, given the June 1953 armistice in Korea and the presence of nuclear weapons on both sides. There was nothing and no need to fight. The rebels could not defeat the Red Army and the MGB without the help of the West. And it is no coincidence that at the end of the 53rd year, just a few months after

Beria's arrest, the leadership of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian rebels decided to stop the armed struggle. The surviving fighters took advantage of amnesties or legalized, hiding their participation in anti-Soviet formations.

In general, Beria was going to radically transform the Soviet Union from a de facto unitary to a truly federal state. His son Sergo testifies:

"Father, a supporter of a single strong state, was nevertheless convinced that the policy pursued by the Center in relation to the republics was precisely harming the friendship of peoples. And the Central Committee always sought to keep the republics "in check", which my father could not reconcile with.

He repeatedly cited examples from the past, using archival materials related to the imperial policy of tsarist Russia. And he argued that in the structure of the modern state, these same methods, even if in a modified state, should not be implanted in any case.

Somehow, I know, he and Zhukov discussed at what stage it is possible to create national army formations and units (apparently, this conversation took place in 1945 or 1946, even before Zhukov's disgrace. - /B.S./). They argued for a long time and came to the conclusion that as soon as the formation of the first such division begins, this republic is no longer part of the USSR ... Zhukov and his father decided that national formations should only be decorative, for parades. Like, say, the republican ministries of foreign affairs. I remember Zhukov urging my father:

- You, Lavrenty, understand, as soon as such units appear, for example, in Ukraine or, say, in Georgia, the end of both the army and the Union ...

Father laughed:

- Well, it's right if we strangle each other ... But seriously, we must bring the entire structure of the state to remain united for external systems, but not put pressure on the republics.

Zhukov agreed, although in his heart, perhaps, he still had doubts. But the national units were never allowed to be created. Father joked:

- And why is Grechko not the commander of the Ukrainian army? Why can Rokossovsky be the Minister of Defense of Poland, but not Grechko? And we will find a Belarusian ...

But jokes are jokes, and thoughts about the real, and not the Union imposed by bayonets, did not leave him until the day of his death.

It should be recognized that in this dispute between the two marshals, Zhukov was right, and not Beria. Lavrenty Pavlovich's plan to create such an association of republics that would act as a single strong state in relation to the outside world, but within itself would have equal republics, with their own armies, police and without the decisive role of the central government, was frankly utopian. Ideally, Beria may have meant to create something like a new United States of America, only in Eurasia. As is well known, the American state is characterized by a clear delineation of powers between the federal center and the states, granting the states broad rights in the sphere of economy and self-government, and having their own police and territorial army. However, the United States, as we know, arose and could exist only in conditions of free enterprise. And to reform the Soviet economic and

political system in this direction in a short time was not possible. To begin under such conditions with the strengthening of the sovereignty of the union republics meant the right path to the collapse of the state. Central planning from Moscow could only be replaced by central planning from the capitals of each of the republics, and this inevitably led each of them to secession from the USSR. But even if such a reform could be carried out, and only then begin to grant additional rights to the republics, there would be no guarantee that the republics, which at one time were by no means voluntarily included in the USSR, and held by the power of the Red Army bayonets and KGB revolvers, would not try to gain true independence, filling with real content decorative foreign ministries and operetta national armies.

Beria also tried to achieve some relaxation in international affairs. He recommended normalizing relations with the Yugoslav leadership, led by Josif Broz Tito, and seeking the unification of Germany as a bourgeois but neutral state. However, all his initiatives were doomed to failure.

First of all, the party apparatus rebelled against the personnel changes planned by Lavrenty Pavlovich in the leadership of the republics. At the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU at the beginning of July 53, the participants of which boldly branded the already arrested Beria, the head of the Communists of Belarus N.S. Patolichev told a terrible story about how the defeated head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs tried to undermine the age-old friendship between the Russian and Belarusian peoples:

"It was a real sabotage on the part of Beria ... For the first time in the history of our multinational state, it takes place when experienced party, Soviet cadres, devoted to our party, are removed from their posts just because they are Russians.

Head of the Mogilev Regional Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs comrade. The venerable has been working in Belarus almost all his life and has been working as a Chekist for at least 20 years. Tov. The venerable was removed by Beria only because he is Russian.

Beria in one fell swoop, without the knowledge of party organs, and in Belarus without the knowledge of the Central Committee of Belarus, removed Russians, Ukrainians from leading positions, starting from the Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus, the entire leadership of the ministry and regional departments. A replacement was also being prepared, up to and including the district police officer ... Beria expelled from the Cheka all party workers sent by the party to the bodies to strengthen them ...

Once the Minister of the Interior, Comrade Baskakov, was in the office of the First Secretary of the Central Committee. Beria called him and said: "Where are you?" - "In the Central Committee, at the first secretary." - "Go to your place, call." Comrade Baskakov reported to me what he had been told, went and called. He was instructed to collect data on the national composition of party, Soviet and Chekist bodies, without reporting this to the Central Committee of Belarus. But Comrade Baskakov immediately reported to the Central Committee. He refused to write a note, then he was summoned to the ministry in Moscow and forced to write, and then they drove him out as unfit.

I want to say, comrades, that Beria, not only in the party, among the people, but also in the organs, did not and could not have support.

Right, right was Nikolai Semenovich. Beria could not count on support not only in the party, but also in his own department (the people did not care about him or his opponents - people could no longer express their opinion and influence the authorities for a long time). Abakumov managed to plant his people there, and many of Beria's former nominees, like Tsanava, managed to defect to the side of Viktor Semyonovich and sat in their places even after the fall of Abakumov. Then the staff of the MGB was replenished with the people of the new minister - the personnel party worker S.DK Ignatiev. Both deputies of Beria, S.N. Kruglov and I.A. Serov, could not be considered his unconditional supporters. Sergei Nikiforovich gravitated more towards Malenkov, and Ivan Aleksandrovich - towards Khrushchev, with whom he worked well in Ukraine. V.S. Ryasnoy and S.A. Goglidze, who were Ignatiev's deputies in the last year of Stalin's life, could not influence personnel policy at that time. Vasily Stepanovich, whom in May 53rd Beria appointed to a key post of the Internal Affairs Directorate of Moscow and the Moscow Region, during the June events went over to the side of his enemies. So, Lavrenty Pavlovich could not use the united Ministry of Internal Affairs as a tool to seize power in 1953.

The mechanical replacement of personnel on a national basis undertaken by Beria did not at all guarantee the loyalty of new nominees to him. In those republics where the Russian and Russified elite were numerous and rallied into a single clan, the Beria reform began to stall even before the fall of its creator. Warned by Baskakov, Patolichev managed to carry out relevant work with local leaders, and as a result, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus refused to change Nikolai

Semyonovich on the Belarusian recommended by Moscow M.V. Zimyanin. The latter was not at all close to Beria and successfully continued his party career after the execution of the "Lubyansk Marshal". It's just that Mikhail Vasilyevich was the first high-ranking nomenklatura of Belarusian nationality that fell into the hands of the members of the Presidium - after all, the second secretary of the Belarusian Communist Party. Maybe just a misfire in Belarus became an important impetus for the formation of an anti-Beria conspiracy in the country's leadership.

Of course, the idea of fighting against the strongest Russification of the party state apparatus in the union republics with the help of peculiar "percentage norms" has nothing in common with democracy. But Beria was not going to build a democratic state in the USSR according to the Western model. He simply understood well: Russification, which was imposed from above by a purely administrative way, can only be got rid of by equally rude, administrative methods. In the absence of democracy, this is the only way.

One gets the impression that Beria expected to put a number of regional party organizations under the control of his supporters in order to start the process of de-Stalinization on the ground. He attached special importance to his native Georgia. To start criticizing the personality cult of Stalin in the homeland of the recently deceased leader probably seemed to him a very successful propaganda move. Already in the Vladimir prison, Mamulov told Pimenov that "in June 1953 he was sent by Beria with a certain inspection of party personnel to prepare an extraordinary XV Congress of the Communist Party of Georgia, at which Beria was going to publicly consolidate the rehabilitation he had begun." In the work on organizing the 15th Congress of Georgian

Communists took an active part and Beria's assistant P.A. Sharia, released from prison immediately after the return of Lavrenty Pavlovich to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (he was imprisoned in the "Mingrelian case"). In all likelihood, Beria read Mamulov as the new head of the Georgian communists, and therefore, immediately before the congress, he achieved his introduction to the Bureau of the Central Committee and appointment as head of the department of party, trade union and Komsomol bodies of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. It is also possible that Beria read Sharia as the leader of the Georgian communists.

Just as dangerous for the overwhelming majority of the nomenklatura was Lavrenty Pavlovich's proposal for the unification of Germany. At the July plenum, Molotov was indignant: "During the discussion of the German question in the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, it was revealed ... that Beria stands on positions completely alien to our party. West and East Germany have united as a bourgeois peace-loving state. These speeches of Beria could not escape our attention... For us, as Marxists, it was and remains clear that under the existing situation, i.e., in the conditions of the present imperialist era, from the perspective that bourgeois Germany can become a peace-loving or neutral state with respect to the USSR - is not only an illusion, but also means a de facto transition to positions alien to socialism ... In the draft resolution of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers introduced by Beria on this issue, it was proposed - to recognize "Wrong under present conditions is the course towards the construction of socialism pursued in the German Democratic Republic." In this regard, it was proposed "to abandon the course for the construction of

socialism in the GDR. "We, of course, could not accept this ... It became clear that Beria was not on communist positions. In this situation, we felt that in the person of Beria we have a person who, to me, has nothing in common with our party that this is a man of the bourgeois camp, that this is an enemy of the Soviet Union.

The capitulatory meaning of Beria's proposals on the German question is obvious. In fact, Zon demanded capitulation to the so-called "Western" bourgeois states ... It became clear to us that this was a stranger, that this was a person of the anti-Soviet camp. (Voices: "That's right! ..").

Malenkov echoed Molotov: "It must be said that Beria, when discussing the German question, proposed not to correct the course towards the forced construction of socialism, but to abandon any course towards socialism in the GDR and head towards bourgeois Germany. In the light of everything that we have now learned about Beria, we must re-evaluate this point of view of his. It is clear that this fact characterizes him as a bourgeois degenerate ... The Presidium decided to remove Beria from his posts and expel him from the Party. The Presidium came to the conclusion that it was impossible to stop halfway with such an adventurer and decided to arrest Beria as an enemy of the Party and the people (voices: "That's right!" Stormy applause).

The comrades-in-arms of Lenin and Stalin were not accustomed to cede a single inch of the land where the foot of the Soviet soldier set foot. The only significant exception was the withdrawal in 1946 of the occupation troops from

Northern Iran, and that this happened only because of the fear of the American atomic bomb. The withdrawal of the Soviet Army from East Germany and consent to the restoration of capitalism there meant not only a step towards the end of the Cold War and the rejection of the spread of socialism to Western Europe on the bayonets of Soviet soldiers, but also an implicit recognition of the advantages of the bourgeois system over the socialist one. Since it did not work out in such an industrially developed and, according to Marx, country as fully ripe for socialism as Germany, it means that something is wrong with the Marxist-Leninist Stalinist theory itself. Beria seems to have understood this, but for Malenkov, Khrushchev, Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, Kaganovich and others, such a recognition was like death. They simply did not think of life for themselves in another social system, not seeing a worthy place for themselves there. Lavrenty Pavlovich was doomed.

CONSPIRACY AGAINST BERIA AND HIS ARREST

After the fact, both Khrushchev and Malenkov each attributed to themselves a leading role in the arrest of Beria. The logic of events seems to suggest that Nikita Sergeevich is closer to the truth here. Still, of all the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, Georgy Maximilianovich was the closest to Beria, and it would not have been reasonable for him to be the first to propose to withdraw "dear friend Lavrenty" to the expense. However, the mechanisms of intrigue among the top party leadership often defy explanation in terms of ordinary logic. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that both Khrushchev and Malenkov did not deceive their souls. Both leaders could well have simultaneously come up with the idea of getting rid of a dangerous rival, who, as Nikita also knew in the depths of his soul,

Sergeevich, and Georgy Maximilianovich, utterly surpassed them as an administrator.

Here is Khrushchev's story about how the conspiracy against Beria took place:

"Our duty with Bulganin has come (at the bedside of the sick Stalin. - / B.S. /) ... I was more intimate with Bulganin than with others, trusted him with my innermost thoughts and said: "Nikolai Alexandrovich, apparently, now we are in such a position that Stalin will soon die. He obviously won't survive. And the doctors say he won't survive. Do you know what post Beria has planned for himself?" - "Which one?" - "He wants the post of Minister of State Security ... We can't let that happen. If Beria gets state security, this will be the beginning of our end. He will take this post in order to destroy us all. And he will do it!"

Bulganin said he agreed with me. And we began to discuss how we would act. I told him: "I'll talk with Malenkov. I think that Malenkov is of the same opinion, he must understand everything. Something must be done, otherwise there will be a catastrophe for the party" ...

As soon as Stalin died, Beria immediately got into his car and sped off to Moscow from the "near dacha". We decided to call all the members of the Bureau there, or, if possible, all the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Party. I do not remember exactly. While they were driving, Malenkov paced the room, agitated. I decided to talk to him: "Yegor," I say, "I need to talk to you." - "About what?" he asked coldly. "Stalin is dead. How will we continue to live?" - "What to say now? Everyone will come together, and we will

speak. That's what we're going to do." It would seem a democratic answer. But I understood it differently, I understood it in such a way that all the questions had been agreed upon by him and Beria for a long time, everything had been discussed for a long time. "Well, okay, - I answer, - we'll talk later" .

So everyone gathered They saw that Stalin had died ... And so the distribution of "portfolios" began. Beria proposed to appoint Malenkov Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR with his release from the duties of secretary of the Central Committee of the party. Malenkov proposed to approve Beria as his first deputy and merge the two ministries, state security and internal affairs, into one Ministry of Internal Affairs, and appoint Beria as minister. I was silent. Bulganin was also silent. Here I was worried that Bulganin would not jump out at the wrong time, because it would be wrong to give himself away in advance. After all, I saw the mood of the others. If Bulganin and I had said that we were against it, we would have been accused by a majority of votes that we were squabblers, disorganizers, and even with a warm corpse, we started a fight in the party for posts. Yes, everything went in the same direction as I expected.

Molotov was also appointed first deputy of the Council of Ministers, Kaganovich - deputy. Voroshilov was proposed to be elected Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, dismissing Shveinik from this post. Beria expressed himself very disrespectfully towards Shvernik: he said that no one in the country knows him at all (the holy true truth. - /B.S./). I saw that there are details of Beria's plan, who wants to make Voroshilov a man who draws up in decrees what Beria will do when his meat grinder starts working. Beria suggested that I be relieved of my duties as secretary of the Moscow Party Committee. We also made other appointments. Adopted the order of the funeral and the order

notification of the people about the death of Stalin. So we, his heirs, began independent activities in the management of the USSR.

In fact, Nikita Sergeevich admitted that even in the last hours of Stalin's life, he agreed with Bulganin to try to remove Beria from the country's leadership. But this required the consent of Malenkov. Grigory Maximilianovich, at that moment, painfully hesitated: whether to try to get rid of Khrushchev together with Beria or, having made an alliance with Nikita Sergeevich, first defeat the powerful chairman of the Special Committee, so that later, in alliance with Molotov, remove Khrushchev himself from the collective leadership. On the historic day of March 5, Malenkov was still leaning towards the first option, which is why he did not speak too warmly with the head of the Moscow party organization. But very soon Georgy Maksimilianovich had to drastically change his position. The fact is that Beria showed no particular desire to fight against any of the "heirs of Stalin." Lavrenty Pavlovich most beneficial was the preservation of the ruling four, where there was a certain system of "checks and balances", and no one had full power. The "Lubyansky Marshal" understood that he could not take the position that Stalin occupied. For this, Lavrenty Pavlovich had neither the authority of a "great helmsman" nor a suitable apparatus at hand. The Special Committee acted mainly through PSU and VSU, which were also not powerful bureaucratic structures, but gave instructions to various ministries and departments. The assignments of the Special Committee to the leaders of local party organizations went through Malenkov. Only with an alliance with him

Beria could hope to carry out his reformist plans, and even then, if only his friend Georgy remained at the head of the Council of Ministers. The marshal had just received the apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at his disposal, and he needed time to place his people in the center and in the field. Therefore, Lavrenty Pavlovich sought to establish good relations with all members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, including Khrushchev.

By the way, one of the reasons why Beria began to actively stop cases related to the fight against the "cosmopolitans" was his realization of one simple fact. In a situation where the leading role of the Russian people was proclaimed in the country and public opinion was turned against national minorities, it was very difficult for a Georgian to stay in the top political leadership. It is no coincidence that Stalin was able to gain power over the party and the country as early as the first half of the 1920s, when the ideas of internationalism were promoted. Beria tried to return to the former international paradigm, trying to "balance" the growing Russian nationalism with the rise of national self-consciousness in the republics. But he didn't succeed.

Again, let's give the floor to "dear Nikita Sergeevich": "During Stalin's funeral and after them, Beria showed great attention to me, showed his respect. I was surprised by this. He did not at all break defiantly friendly ties with Malenkov, but suddenly began to establish friendly relations and with me".

Nikita Sergeevich friendship with Beria was useless. He was going to throw Lavrenty Pavlovich off the ship of power, in order to send Malenkov into the abyss of disgrace and oblivion. Beria tried to fight not only against the personality cult of Stalin, but also against the cult

his heirs. The chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs proposed not to decorate the columns of demonstrators on May 1 and November 7 with portraits of members of the Presidium of the Central Committee and slogans in their honor. At the July plenum of 1953, Mikoyan said indignantly: "In the first days after the death of Comrade Stalin, he (Beria. - /B.S./) stood up against the cult of personality." Lavrenty Pavlovich considered the conditions for collective leadership to be the most favorable in order to preserve and strengthen his own power and influence.

Khrushchev characterized Beria's proposals on national and German questions and on the fight against the personality cult of leaders in the following way: We are heading for disaster. Beria picked up knives for us." Malenkov told me: "Well, what should I do? I see, but what should I do?" I told him: "We must resist, at least in this form: you see that the questions that Beria raises often have an anti-party orientation. We must not accept them, but object." - "Do you want me to be left alone? I don't want Noah." - "Why do you think that you will be left alone if you start to object? You are already two. Bulganin, I am sure, thinks the same way, because I have exchanged opinions with him more than once. Others will also go with us if we object with arguments, from party positions. You yourself do not give anyone the opportunity to say a word. As soon as Beria makes a proposal, you immediately rush to support him, declaring: right, the correct proposal, I am for, who is against? And then you vote. And you

give others the opportunity to speak, hold back, do not jump out and you will see that more than one person thinks differently. I am convinced that many do not agree with Beria on a number of issues.

From a translation from the party language into a universal language, this meant a proposal to unite against the overly nimble "Lubyansk Marshal." Georgy Maximilianovich had to think hard again. On the one hand, with the removal of Beria, he lost an important ally in the leadership, who controlled one of the two power ministries. This greatly weakened his position in the upcoming struggle for power. But, on the other hand, Beria did not show a desire to move along with Malenkov to a confrontation with Khrushchev, and even more so to use force in this confrontation. On the contrary, he even flirted with Nikita Sergeevich. Malenkov could suspect that if Khrushchev's proposal was not accepted now, then Nikita Sergeevich would try to conspire with Beria against him, Malenkov. Moreover, Khrushchev made it clear: Defense Minister Bulganin was at one with him. In addition, Beria's proposals aroused discontent both among the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee and among local party and Soviet leaders. In the end, Georgy Maximilianovich decided to surrender Beria, hoping in the future to defeat Khrushchev with the help of the "old guard" - Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, who were in the pen in the last years of Stalin's rule. It is no coincidence that immediately after the death of the dictator, on the initiative of Malenkov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich received important appointments, and Molotov was promoted to First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. In addition, Malenkov took into account that his man, S.N. Kruglov, remains with Beria as a deputy, and after the fall of Lavrenty Pavlovich, he has every chance to head the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

But it cannot be ruled out that Khrushchev's conversation with Malenkov quoted above was simply made up after the fact in order to convince

readers that the conspiracy against Beria arose only in response to his "anti-Party actions." Another version is no less likely: Khrushchev and Malenkov, immediately after Stalin's death, decided to get rid of Beria, and all further events developed according to their pre-planned scenario. And if there was a conversation between Khrushchev and Malenkov, then there was still the snow of Stalin.

Khrushchev in his memoirs claims that after a conversation with Malenkov, they managed to fail Beria's proposals at the next meeting of the Presidium. There is no documentary evidence for this. It is possible that Nikita Sergeevich invented this episode so that his and other members of the Presidium did not look like a simple conspiracy against Beria. So, they say, at first they criticized Lavrenty Pavlovich for incorrect proposals, but he not only did not come to his senses, but began to prepare a coup. Of course, the scoundrel had to be arrested. In reality, the conspirator, on the contrary, had to hide his true feelings for the powerful chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs until the very last moment.

Having convinced Malenkov, Khrushchev, according to him, began to persuade other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee to oppose Beria. This is how he describes this delicate process in his memoirs: "We saw that Beria began to force events. He already felt himself above the members of the Presidium, put on airs and even outwardly demonstrated his

superiority. We were going through a very dangerous moment. I believed that it was necessary to act urgently, and told Malenkov that it was necessary to talk with other members of the Presidium about this. Apparently, this will not work out at the meeting, and it is necessary to talk face to face with everyone, to find out the opinion on the fundamental issue of attitude towards Beria. Malenkov also agreed: "It's time to act" ...

I came to Voroshilov in the Supreme Soviet, but I did not get what I had hoped for. As soon as I opened the door and crossed the threshold of his office, he very loudly began to praise Beria: "What a comrade Khrushchev we have, a wonderful person Lavrenty Pavlovich, what an exceptional person he is!" Nikita Sergeevich decided that it was somehow uncomfortable after such words immediately to agitate Voroshilov to remove the "wonderful man" from the leadership as soon as possible, and postponed the conversation until a more appropriate moment. But there was no misfire with Molotov. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich had never liked Lavrenty Pavlovich before, not without reason seeing him as a dangerous competitor (let us recall, for example, the story of atomic bomb). Therefore, I met the idea of destroying Beria with enthusiasm. He only asked what Malenkov thought. Khrushchev reassured him: "I am talking to you now on behalf of both Malenkov and Bulganin." Then Molotov completely perked up. The other members of the Presidium did not they forced themselves to persuade for a long time, they only asked the sacramental question: "How is Malenkov?" Voroshilov agreed after Georgy Maximilianovich spoke to him, just before the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, at which they were going to arrest Beria. Then Khrushchev treated Mikoyan, who, according to Nikita Sergeevich, had "the best relations with Beria, they stood up for each other like a mountain." Anastas Ivanovich answered diplomatically: "Beria really has negative qualities, but he is not hopeless, he can work as part of a team." Khrushchev decided that the cautious Mikoyan would still not be able to interfere with his plans. Anastas Ivanovich calmly went to the airfield to meet Beria, who had returned from the GDR.

Mikoyan did not warn his old friend about the danger, but repeated the tale learned by heart from the words of Khrushchev and Malenkov that an emergency meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers on German affairs was going to be held.

It is sometimes suggested that at the very last moment Lavrenty Pavlovich suspected that some kind of filth was being prepared against him by "dear comrades" from the Presidium of the Central Committee, and tried to take some precautions. The publicist Kirill Stolyarov, one of the first who tried to objectively look at the activities of the "Lubyansk martal", asks the question: "Did Beria feel the approach of his death? Did he take any steps to protect himself, to strike back? Archival documents give reason to believe that that at the very last moment Beria sensed this danger, but it was too late.

And further, based on the materials of the case of the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Sh.O. Tsereteli, who is already familiar to us, Stolyarov reports: "In the last days of June 1953, late at night, a telephone rang in the bedroom. himself: "Tsereteli" - "Colonel Kovalevsky reports... Shalva Otarovich, from Moscow

Army General Maslennikov called. He urgently asks you to contact on "HF" ...

Tsereteli ... proceeded to the government communications apparatus and ordered to connect it with Moscow. A few minutes later, he heard Maslennikov's voice: "Shalva Otarovich, I just left Beria's office," Maslennikov explained. "Lavrenty Pavlovich ordered you to fly to Moscow on the very first plane" ...

However, in Moscow, Maslennikov did not receive Tsereteli, citing extreme employment. And the next day, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR openly started talking about the arrest of Beria. " Soon Tsereteli was arrested.

Stolyarov is inclined to believe that Beria urgently gathered loyal people to the capital, trying to take some kind of countermeasures against the conspiracy being prepared against him. However, in reality, Tsereteli and other Beriaites from Georgia were summoned to Moscow on the night of June 25-26 only to make it easier for them to arrest. And then all of a sudden, having learned the boss's arrest, they will try to leave for Turkey! Khrushchev, Molotov and Malenkov did not want a second Lyushkov.

The story of Lieutenant General S.S. convinces that Beria's people were simply lured into a trap. Mamulov to dissident R.O. Pimenov. Stepan Solomonovich was a person very close to Beria and in June 53 headed the department of party, trade union and Komsomol bodies of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. And this is what he told a cellmate in the Vladimir prison: "In June 1953, he was sent by Beria with a certain inspection of party personnel to prepare an extraordinary XV Congress of the Communist Party of Georgia ... Before he could arrive in Georgia, he was overtaken by a telegram on behalf of Beria - a fake one - with an order Coming out of the plane at a military airfield, he fell into the arms of his front-line friend, also a general: "How old! What a joy to meet!" - but he could no longer escape from the embrace, because several pairs of unknown men joined the general's two hands, first of all depriving him of a pistol.

If Beria's deputy I.I. Maslennikov really called Tsereteli to Moscow in a conversation on HF, thereby, perhaps, saving himself from being convicted along with Lavrenty Pavlovich. However, the conversation on HF could also be an artistic fantasy of K.A. Stolyarov, but in reality S. On Tsereteli, may have been summoned to the capital from Tbilisi, like Mamulov, by a false telegram.

The military was brought in to arrest Beria. Subsequently, marshals G.Kb Zhukov and K.S. Moskalenko was told in different ways how they took Beria. Each sought to ascribe to himself the main role. Whom to believe? An unexpected confirmation of the correctness of one of the marshals came from Malenkov under circumstances that ruled out insincerity on his part.

When in June 1957 the plenum of the Central Committee smashed "the anti-party group of Malenkov, Kaganovich, Molotov and Shepilov who joined them," Georgy Maximilianovich tried to remind his comrades of his past merits, and in particular, pointed out his role in organizing the arrest of Beria: "Beria was exposed not so simple. We then relied on our military comrades in this matter at the most necessary moment, Comrade Moskalenko rendered us a decisive service in this matter.

at a difficult moment, we contacted Comrade Khrushchev, we were without strength and means ... "Only the lazy did not kick Malenkov at the plenum. His statements refuted him at every step and with pleasure. Both Zhukov and Moskalenko were present in the hall, but not one of them, this time, he did not argue with Georgy Maximilianovich. So, Malenkov's words about the decisive role of Moskalenko in creating a group of generals to arrest the formidable Lavrenty Pavlovich are the holy true truth. And how else to explain why it was so in the team that arrested Beria there are many officers and generals from the headquarters of the Moscow Air Defense District, which was headed by Kirill Semenovitch. Therefore, we can basically trust Moskalenko's story. I want to quote him:

"At 9 o'clock in the morning (June 25, 1953. - /B.S./), Khrushchev called me on the telephone of the Kremlin's automatic telephone exchange, he asked: "Are there people close to you in your environment and devoted to our party as you are devoted to it? .."

After that, Khrushchev told me to take these people with me and come with them to the Kremlin to see Comrade Malenkov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, in the office where Stalin used to work.

Further, Khrushchev hinted in code that they should take weapons with them: "He said that I should take air defense plans and maps with me, and also grab cigarettes. I replied that I would take all of the above with me, but I quit smoking back in the war, in 1944 Khrushchev laughed and said that cigarettes might not be what I mean. Then I guessed that we should take weapons with us. At the end of the conversation, Khrushchev said that he would call Bulganin now. I thought that we had to do some This is an important task of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

Shortly after this, a call came from the Minister of Defense, Marshal Bulganin, who said that Khrushchev called and suggested that I first come to him, that is, to Bulganin ... I arrived with my group

to the Minister of Defense. Comrade Bulganin received me alone. He said that Khrushchev called, so I called you. We need to arrest Beria... How many people do you have? I replied: there are five people with me ... To which he replied: "Very few people ... Who do you think can still be attracted, but without delay? I answered - your deputy marshal Vasilevsky. For some reason, he immediately rejected this candidacy. I asked who is now in the Ministry of the influential military. Bulganin replied: "Zhukov." Then I offered to take Zhukov. He agreed, but that Zhukov was unarmed ...

And at 11:00 a.m. on June 26 (and Khrushchev's call was on 25.6.), at Bulganin's suggestion, we sowed into his car and drove to the Kremlin ... Following us, Zhukov, Brezhnev and others arrived in another car. Bulganin led us all into the room waiting at Malenkov's office, then he left us and went to Malenkov's office.

A few minutes later Khrushchev, Bulganin, Malenkov and Molotov came out to us. They began to tell us that Beria has recently been acting impudently towards the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, spying on them, eavesdropping on telephone conversations, following them, who goes where, with whom the members of the Presidium meet, is rude to everyone, etc. They informed us that there would now be a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee, and then, at the agreed signal transmitted through the assistant

Malenkova - Sukhanov, we need to enter the office and arrest Beria. So far, he hasn't arrived...

About an hour later, that is, at 13.00 on June 26, 1953, a prearranged signal followed, and we, five armed men, the sixth comrade Zhukov, quickly entered the office where the meeting was taking place. Comrade Malenkov announced: "In the name of Soviet law, arrest Beria." Everyone drew their weapons, I pointed it straight at Beria and ordered him to put his hands up. At this time, Zhukov searched Beria, after which we took him to the rest room of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and all members of the Presidium and candidate members remained to hold the meeting, and Zhukov also remained there.

From the story of Kirill Semyonovich, a curious picture emerges. Zhukov is involved in the operation only at the very last moment and, just in case, is left without a gun. This means that Khrushchev and Bulganin do not fully trust him. Why?

Sergo Beria claims that his father was friends with Zhukov, who often visited their house. Beria shared the thoughts of Georgy Konstantinovich that the institute of political workers should be liquidated in the army. Of course, Sergo Lavrentievich is a person of interest. He really wants to bring the name of his father closer to the name of the one who has now been made a national hero. Is there any other evidence? It turns out there is!

After his arrest, Lavrenty Pavlovich bombarded Malenkov ("dear Georgy"), Khrushchev and other colleagues with desperate letters, where he pointed out his past merits. On July 1, he wrote: "T. T. Malenkov and Molotov (another variant of deciphering - Mikoyan. - / B. S. /) should know well that Zhukov, when he was removed from the general staff at the instigation of Mekhlis, because his position was very dangerous, together with you we persuaded him to appoint him commander of the front and thereby saved the future hero of our Patriotic War, or when Comrade Zhukov was expelled from the Central Committee, we were all hurt. If Beria did not lie,

looking into the eyes of imminent death, this letter proves that he and Georgy Konstantinovich were not on bad terms at all.

Khrushchev, Malenkov and their supporters really needed an authoritative military leader, whose presence would cheer up the generals going on a dashing and unusual business: to arrest a martal. True, among the conspirators was the Minister of Defense, Marshal Bulganin, but he was not popular among the generals. The preparation of the team for the arrest of Beria Khrushchev entrusted General Colonel Moskalenko, who headed the Moscow Air Defense District and was well known to Nikita Sergeevich from the war. It was on Khrushchev's recommendation that Kirill Semyonovich was appointed in the fall of 1943 to command the 38th Army, which liberated the capital of Ukraine. But Moskalenko was not widely known. And even today he is most often remembered only in connection with the arrest of Beria. Another thing is Zhukov, Bulganin's first deputy. His presence could impress even the Kremlin guards, if they suddenly decided to intercede for their boss. But Khrushchev and Malenkov were probably aware of the contacts of Zhukov and Beria, and they were afraid that suddenly the "marshal of victory" would take the side of the "Lubyansk marshal" and, God forbid, arrange a shootout at a meeting of the Presidium. So, just in case, they decided not to give him a gun. But Georgy Konstantinovich quickly orientated himself in the situation.

The archives contain rough sketches by Malenkov of the speech with which he opened the meeting on June 26, and his abstract notes of the proposals made there. This is the only somewhat reliable source of information about exactly how Lavrenty Pavlovich was removed from all posts, since no transcripts of this meeting were kept. Georgy Maksimilianovich told his colleagues on the Presidium: "The enemies wanted to place the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs above the party and the government. The task is to place the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the service of the party and the government, to take these bodies under the control of the party. The enemies wanted to use the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for criminal purposes. is to eliminate any possibility of a repetition of such crimes. The bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs occupy a place in the system of the state apparatus, where there is the greatest opportunity to abuse power. The task is to prevent the abuse of power. "

The rest of Malenkov's speech has survived only in very fragmentary notes. According to them, it can be judged that Georgy Maksimilianovich proposed to re-divide the newly united Ministry of Internal Affairs into the Ministry of Internal Affairs itself and the State Security Committee: environment of the party leadership. - /B.S./).

Committee (obviously, state security. - / B. S. /) - inside looks at enemies, protect friends, not - to establish intelligence. The Ministry of Internal Affairs - the task is - the camps must check ... "

Other participants in the meeting accused Lavrenty Pavlovich of "peremptiveness", that he "suppressed the team." Beria also recalled overly liberal proposals to change policy in the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus and in the Baltic republics ("facts - Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia. We need

whether these activities. What happened, how did you understand? The Ministry of Internal Affairs corrected the party and the government. Central Committee - in the background"). They also recalled the "independent" actions on the "Hungarian question", when Lavrenty Pavlovich got out with Nagy's candidacy without discussing it with all members of the "four". At the same time, Mikoyan proposed to relieve Beria from the post of first deputy government and appoint Minister of the Oil Industry (Khrushchev writes about the same in his memoirs.) This fact alone destroys all the legends that Lavrenty Pavlovich organized a conspiracy and planned a coup d'état. Where, in what country, a person accused of such serious crimes, as a punishment would they be demoted from first vice-premiers to ordinary ministers? If any specific facts appeared at the meeting that convicted Beria of preparing a coup, Anastas Ivanovich would never have risked making such a proposal. After all, this would be a direct path to being declared Beria's accomplice with all the ensuing consequences. Those present knew very well that Mikoyan was one of those who recommended Lavrenty Pavlovich to work in Moscow.

At the meeting of the Presidium, a proposal was also received to transfer the management of the protection of senior officials under the direct control of the Central Committee, and then, as Malenkov stated, "From morning to evening, one step

you will step without control!" And he demanded: "Our guards - each separately, (submits. - / Kommersant S. /) to the one who is guarded (without denunciations)" (before there was a double subordination - the Ministry of Internal Affairs and that member of the Presidium of the Central Committee, which these "tramps" are guarding.) And one more point bothered Malenkov: "The organization of wiretapping - the Central Committee - control. The comrades are not sure who is eavesdropping on whom."

Here, I think, Georgy Maximilianovich was cunning. After all, he, along with Nikita Sergeevich and other members of the Presidium, were able to plan and carry out a conspiracy against Beria in an excellent way, despite the fact that both the Kremlin guard and the "wiretapping" service were subordinate to Lavrenty Pavlovich. And the point, probably, is that the guards of the members of the Presidium, although formally subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, preferred, first of all, to obey their wards, from whom they received a lot of various benefits. Moreover, I would venture to suggest that if Khrushchev and Malenkov, the head of government and head of the party, and even Voroshilov, the formal head of state, and even several members of the Presidium, would call the head of the Kremlin guard and order him to arrest Beria as a seasoned American, German or Japanese spy, he would readily carry out this order. Is it the first time for Chekists to arrest members of the top political leadership? In 1937-38 they were arrested in abundance. And Beria to the head of security is not a godfather and not a matchmaker. At the head of the united Ministry of Internal Affairs, Lavrenty Pavlovich - a week without a year. The people in the Kremlin guards are still the same, Ignatiev. So why should they argue with Malenkov and Khrushchev, defend Beria with their breasts and make big troubles on their own heads!

No, horror films about the guards, who will shoot the guarded man in the back or inform about his love tricks where they shouldn't, Malenkov needed to frighten his colleagues on the Presidium and enlist their approval for the most severe measures against Beria.

And why, after all, Nikita Sergeevich with Georgy

Maximilianovich decided to involve not the Chekists, but the military in the arrest of a dangerous rival? I think because they wanted to enlist the loyalty of the army. After all, the situation in the country is relatively unstable. Collective leadership does not enjoy the unconditional authority that Stalin had. All the members of the Quartet taken together are much less afraid than one generalissimo. And the process of turning the "four" into a "troika", and even in such an inelegant way, when an objectionable leader is arrested with the clear intention of being shot after a quick and wrong trial, in itself introduces additional destabilization. Suddenly, one of the high-ranking military decides that it is much more convenient for him than dear Georgy Maximilianovich and Nikita Sergeevich to govern the state? The only one of the major military leaders, popular among the officers and located at that moment in Moscow, is Zhukov (his brother-in-law Vasilevsky, who was not distinguished by a strong will, does not count). His rivals in this regard, Rokossovsky and Konev, are far from the capital: Rokossovsky - in fraternal Poland as Minister of Defense, Konev - in Western Ukraine, commands the Carpathian military district, whose troops are fighting the remnants of the UPA. So Zhukov is the most dangerous now. It is not so important that he is on good terms with Beria.

After all, Georgy Maximilianovich himself until the very last moment was considered a friend of Lavrenty Pavlovich! Although it does not hurt to insure here. But the main danger, as if Zhukov, not only to Beria, but also to all members of the Presidium "Hands up!" did not command. Therefore, just in case, Georgy Konstantinovich was not given weapons and was connected to the conspiracy only at the very last moment, so that he would not have time to prepare his own game. And the devoted Khrushchev Moskalkenko was ordered to keep an eye on Zhukov. So the marshal was tied with the "collective leadership" of the joint action to arrest Beria and, at least for a while, was removed from the number of contenders for supreme power.

Probably, Malenkov or Mikoyan declared at the Presidium: "The post of Minister of the Interior belongs to Comrade Beria - from this post he controls the party and the government. This is fraught with great dangers, if it is not corrected in time, now."

One gets the impression that almost until the very end the meeting went on in such a way that Beria, although he sensed the danger, did not realize in any way that she was mortal. He probably understood that they were going to remove him from the post of head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, probably remove him from the Presidium of the Central Committee, deprive him of the post of first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and appoint him to some ordinary ministerial position - for example, the minister of the oil industry. They have already outlined how to dispose of the Beria inheritance: "Ministry of Internal Affairs - give a post to another (Kruglov) + Central Committee ... Special Committee - to the Ministry. Saburov and Khrushchev (possible leaders of the new ministry were named. - / Kommersant S. /). And how Out of the blue, Lavrenty Pavlovich heard Malenkov's final demand to arrest him, Beria, and the appearance of Moskalkenko with Zhukov and several other generals and colonels.

In Malenkov's note, the enigmatic words were preserved: "The court is the foundation of a Special Meeting of Facts." Obviously, already at the meeting, the Presidium decided to bring the disgraced chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to court in the manner of the Special Meeting, which Beria himself proposed to abolish. Thus, in fact, the death sentences of Precedents were foreordained, in order to

A special meeting left alive a member of the Politburo who fell into his hands, until now there has not been. And, in order to justify the application of capital punishment, they have already begun to select facts for the version of the "Beria plot."

Mikoyan himself, in his posthumously published memoirs, claimed that since the beginning of the 30s he had seen that Beria was a bad person. the moment when the majority of the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee were inclined to lean the too nimble head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs against the wall. As for Mikoyan's assertions that they tried to cover him up in repressions, but failed, let's leave the former head of Soviet foreign and domestic trade on the conscience. Suffice it to say that his signature flaunts under the decision of the Politburo of March 5, 1940 on the execution of 22,000 Poles. By the standards of the Nuremberg International Tribunal, it would be quite enough to be hanged. And there is no doubt that this is not the only document signed by the leader, about which

they said - "from Ilyich to Ilyich without a heart attack and paralysis." And as for Mikoyan's opinion, that Beria was moved upstairs, to the central office, by mysterious Georgians ... One of the high-ranking Georgians, A.S. Yenukidze, lost his post as secretary of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee back in 1935, when Beria remained in the Transcaucasus and there was no question of his moving to Moscow. Another Georgian in the Soviet leadership, Ordzhonikidze, committed suicide after a bitter conflict with Stalin. This happened a year and a half before the appointment of Lavrenty Pavlovich as the first deputy people's commissar of internal affairs. Is it possible that before nominating the head of the Communists of Georgia to such a responsible post, Iosif Vissarionovich did not consult with Mikoyan, who once worked together with Beria in the Transcaucasus?

By the way, at the July plenum, where Beria was branded, Mikoyan spoke about the defeated "Lubyansk Marshal" much more restrainedly than in his later memoirs. In particular, he did not directly confirm that Beria was a Musavatist and English spy, although he tried to cast a shadow on the wattle fence: "Having received such an accusation, such a blow at the Plenum of the Central Committee (in 1937. - /b. S./), that he works in bourgeois counterintelligence, and was not sent by the party, as he claims, he did not consider it necessary to present documents confirming the reality in order to remove such a stain from himself. In this case, Lavrenty Pavlovich? A certificate from the Musavatists that he worked for them on the instructions of the Bolsheviks? After all, the matter was purely conspiratorial, and it was risky to trust the essence of Beria's mission to paper - the underground sent him to counterintelligence, who at any moment could be arrested themselves. /B.S./). Otherwise, he would never have missed such an opportunity. This means that he was not in the regional organization. Therefore, Comrade Khrushchev is absolutely right when he stated: "Was or was not sent by the party organization, this does not increase trust when it is revealed in our eyes." Indeed, it is not known whether his work in counterintelligence was not a screen for carrying out orders not from the communists, but from other masters "".

Yes, at a meeting of the Presidium, Nikita Sergeevich said quite frankly: what difference does it make whether he served on the instructions of the party or not

Beria in Musavat counterintelligence. The main thing is that the person is bad, and we have fully exposed him as an enemy of the Party and the people. It was then that the question of Beria as a "Musavatist spy" was intensively exaggerated as a winning propaganda device.

After Beria's arrest, rumors circulated that Khrushchev and the others managed to preempt Beria by literally one day. Allegedly, on June 27, Lavrenty Pavlovich was going to arrest the entire Presidium of the PC at a performance at the Bolshoi Theater. I wonder which head of the conspiracy will agree to leave the country for 10 days on the eve of "Day X" in order to return only the day before? And just in mid-June, Beria was sent to the GDR, where unrest was growing and where, after his arrival, an uprising broke out against the regime of Walter Ulbricht. The time for liberalization had already been lost, and Lavrenty Pavlovich, not at all embarrassed, threw infantry and tanks from the Soviet occupation forces against the practically unarmed demonstrators. Action by the workers of Berlin and other cities of East Germany

was drowned in blood. According to official figures, about 30 people were killed, about 400 injured; according to unofficial reports, there were several hundred killed. Beria flew to Moscow only on the morning of the 26th and immediately got from the airship to the last "ball" in his life - a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee (he was told that it was not the Central Committee, but the Council of Ministers).

By the way, the whole essence of Beria was manifested in the suppression of the uprising in East Germany. Lavrenty Pavlovich was ready to carry out far-reaching reforms, but only from above, without the participation of the masses. Any speeches against communist rule, even under similar reformist slogans, he mercilessly suppressed.

LETTERS FROM A DEAD MAN

Placed after his arrest in the bunker of the headquarters of the Moscow Military District, Lavrenty Pavlovich bombarded his colleagues with letters, where he begged for mercy on him. On June 28, Beria sent the first letter to Malenkov:

"Dear Georgy. I was sure that from that big criticism at the Presidium I would draw all the necessary conclusions for myself and be useful in the team (perhaps here Beria literally repeated Mikoyan's proposal. - / B. S. /). But the Central Committee decided otherwise "I believe that the Central Committee did the right thing. I consider it necessary to say that I was always infinitely devoted to the party of Lenin-Stalin, to my homeland, was always active in work. I worked in Georgia, in the Transcaucasus, in Moscow in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and again in the Ministry of Internal Affairs ", gave everything to work, tried to select personnel for business qualities, comrades of principle, devoted to our party. The same applies to the Special Committee, the First and Second Main Directorates, dealing with atomic affairs and guided missiles. The same position of the Secretariat and assistants in the Council of Ministers. I ask comrades Georgy Malenkov, Vyacheslav Molotov, Klimenty Voroshilov, Nikita Khrushchev, Lazar Kaganovich, Nikolai Bulganin, Anastas Mikoyan and others - let them forgive if there was anything during these fifteen years of great and intense joint work. Dear comrades, I wish you all great success in the struggle for the cause of Lenin and Stalin, for the unity and solidity of our Party, for the flourishing of our glorious Motherland.

George, I will forgive, if you consider it possible, the family (wife and old mother) and son Sergo, whom you know, do not leave without attention.

We must pay tribute to Lavrenty Pavlovich. In this, in fact, suicide letter, he not only fussed about himself (although he did not directly ask for anything, he only hinted that for good work, for the atomic bomb and rocket weapons, one might not be shot). And not only about the family, which Malenkov, of course, did not leave without attention: his wife Nina and son Sergo were immediately arrested. Beria also asked for his employees, up to assistants and secretaries. He said that he selected people only for business qualities, naively hoping that disgrace would pass them by. Maybe because he felt no real guilt in the dream. After all, not only was he not preparing a coup d'etat, but he was not even going to remove any of the members of the Presidium.

Two days later, having no reaction to the first message, Beria wrote again. Now he decided that if you repent not of real mistakes, but

in non-existent sins that he was accused of, life, maybe, will be saved. Most importantly, in this letter, Lavrenty Pavlovich, probably in the depths of his soul no longer hoping that he would come out of this alteration alive, summed up his life path. The prisoner turned to "friend Malenkov":

"Dear George!

During these four difficult days for me, I thoroughly thought through everything that took place on my part after the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, both at work and in relation to you personally and - some comrades of the Presidium of the Central Committee, and subjected my actions to the most severe criticism, strongly I condemn myself. Especially hard and unforgivable is my command in relation to you, where I am one hundred percent to blame. Among other comrades, I also firmly and energetically set to work with the only thought to do everything possible and not to fail for all of us without Comrade Stalin and to support the new leadership of the Central Committee and Government by deeds, strengthening the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and local bodies, the Ministry of Internal Affairs submitted to the Central Committee and The government on your advice and on some issues on the advice of Comrade Khrushchev N.S. a number of deserving political and practical proposals, such as: on the rehabilitation of doctors, the rehabilitation of those arrested in the so-called Mingrelian national center in Georgia and the return of those wrongly exiled from Georgia, on amnesty, on the abolition of the passport regime, on correcting the distortion of the party line allowed in national politics and in punitive measures in the Lithuanian USSR, Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, but your criticism, criticism of N.S. Khrushchev, is absolutely fair. and criticism of other comrades at the Presidium of the Central Committee; with my last participation, to my wrong desire, together with the decisions of the Central Committee, to send out memoranda of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Of course, in this way, to a certain extent, the significance of the decisions of the Central Committee itself was belittled and an unacceptable situation was created that the Ministry of Internal Affairs seemed to correct the Central Committees of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus, while the role of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was limited only to fulfilling the instructions of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Government. I want to say frankly that on my part, insisting on the distribution of memorandums was stupidity and political thoughtlessness, all the more you advised me, this is not

should be done. My behavior at the meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee, and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, was very often wrong and unacceptable, introducing nervousness and excessive harshness, I would say, as I thought and understood it well now, sometimes it came to unacceptable rudeness and impudence on my part in relation to Khrushchev. .WITH. and Bulganina N. And when discussing the German question, of course, I am definitely to blame here and deserve all condemnation. At the same time, like all of you, I tried to make proposals to the Presidium aimed at the correct solution of questions, such as Korean, German, Answers to Eisenhower and Churchill, Turkish, Iranian, etc.

My act at the reception of the Hungarian comrades was not justified in any way. Suggestions about Nagy Imre [\$] should not have been made by me or someone else, but you had to do (then Beria climbed across the father - Malenkov - into hell. - / B. S. /), and then I jumped out idiotically, besides , along with the correct remarks, I took liberties and

swagger, for which, of course, I should be warmed up tightly. But I must say with all honesty that I myself carefully prepared and forced my assistants to prepare for the meetings of the Central Committee and the government in order to help, to the best of their ability and ability, in the correct solution of the issues under discussion. If, however, initiative questions were introduced by me, I revised them several times together with the comrades working with me, so as not to make a mistake and not let the Central Committee and the Government down. I stayed at the Council of Ministers, I did not have time to present you with a memorandum and a draft decision on streamlining award cases, I spent about two months on this. The question of this, as you know, we nurtured for a long time during Comrade Stalin's lifetime. With regard to the comrades with whom I work, I have always tried to be principled, party, demanding, so that the work entrusted to them is carried out as required in the interests of our party and our government. I have never had any other relations with these comrades. Take at least senior officials in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. T-schey Kruglov, Kobulov, Serov, Maslennikov, Fedotov, Stakhanov, Pitovranov, Korotkov, Sazykin, Gorlinsky, Goglidze, Ryasny, Sudoplatov, Savchenko, Raikhman, Obruchnikov, Meshik, Zyryanov and many others (the absence of Merkulov in the list is indicative; probably Beria, listing people close to himself, Merkulov no longer considered such in 1953. - / Kommersant S. /), in addition to helping them in their work, demands to better organize the fight against the enemies of the Soviet State, both inside the Country and outside it I wasn't there. Yes, and these comrades worked as it should be for real party members. Comrade Serov with a brigade to provide assistance to the Moscow and Leningrad police simply drove him to do everything possible, to restore order in the work of the police of these cities and to draw the necessary conclusions and proposals for other Republics. Of course, under the leadership of the Party and the Government, the work of the Ministry of Internal Affairs could be established within no more than a year, both within the country and in foreign countries, and provide qualified advice to the Countries of People's Democracy, for this there are more than enough people in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, only you need to painstakingly and work tirelessly. At the beginning I said that I am to blame for you, that I did not manage to put myself forward, as I was obliged to do, this is the most unforgivable mistake. Moreover, it is very annoying that we worked together, honestly, in a party way for many years and the difficult and formidable military and the recovery period of our country. Everything of value in my life comes from working with you. From the very first days in 1938, to restore order in

Ministry of Internal Affairs, your participation in the acceptance and delivery of cases, strengthening the personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with your help - a lot of hard work during the war in the State Defense Committee, when, by the will of the party, we were instructed: you - to organize the production of aircraft in the required quantities in the enterprises of ministries and engines, and for me - weapons and ammunition, or issues of formation for the front, joint work in the Operational Bureau of the USSR Council of People's Commissars on the organization of the national economy during the war, when it was necessary to strongly support the work of transport, both you and I were sent. Kaganovich L.M. and Mikoyan A.I. for the establishment of railway transport, which played an exceptional role. The first weeks of the war, when there was nothing to cover the Western Front -

which the Germans strongly pressed, our joint work to create, under the leadership of the State Committee, the Headquarters and personally Comrade Stalin, a reserve front to protect the approaches to Moscow, 15 full-blooded, KGB military divisions were organized for the reserve front alone. At the same time sending you to the Stalingrad front, me to the Caucasian. It must be said frankly that we were most conscientious in carrying out the instructions of the Party, the Government and Comrade Stalin, we never spared strength and energy and knew no fear. After the war, joint work in the Commission for the Reconstruction of Destroyed Areas. I should especially note our joint active long-term work in the Special Committee under the Council of Ministers on the creation of atomic weapons, and later on the Kometa and Berkut systems - guided missiles. I never forgot your great comradely human attitude towards me when, for reasons known to you, in a depressed mood, I flew in 1948 to the Semipalatinsk region of the Kazakh SSR, where, as you know, the testing of atomic weapons was successfully completed. As you well know, and recently also Comrade N.A. Bulganin, the organizations controlled by the Special Committee, the First and Second Main Directorates and their enterprises and the Scientific and Technical Forces, laboratories, design bureaus and institutes represent a colossal achievement, it is the pride of our country. I reported to you in passing, and instructed the Government to draw up a detailed report on the state of our atomic affairs. Already this year, several explosions should be carried out, including one super-powerful model equal to 250-300 thousand tons of TNT. [9]

According to the Berkut, the tests were completed successfully. Now the whole thing is to ensure the production in series and the appropriate personnel, and in this area a lot is being done by the relevant ministries. Most importantly, on the basis of the "Kometa" and "Berkut" there are colossal opportunities for further improvements in the field of guided missiles, both in terms of accuracy, and in terms of speed and range. A special report is being prepared for the government. These weapons must be moved forward, this is the real future, with which the army of our country must be armed. The United States and Britain attach exceptional importance to this. I repeat, all this was achieved because the Party and the Government wanted it, but I wanted to say that we worked together here too. Almost simultaneously, you were released from the Central Committee and me from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and began to work in the Council of People's Commissars, I repeat, they began to work together, also honestly and in a party way, together with comrades V.M. Molotov, L.M. Kaganovich, N.A. Bulganin, Voroshilov, Mikoyan A.I., and after moving to Moscow and Art. Khrushchev N.S. and others. By our work, by our devotion to our Central Committee and our Government, we convinced Comrade Stalin that he was

wrong about us. I'm not talking about all sorts of instructions that were given to us by the Central Committee, the government and personally Comrade Stalin, in connection with which we had to work very often and painstakingly, we always tried to be principled, objective, we had no other interests, it so happened that we met almost every day for ten years and our conversation was always only about business, about people, how best to organize this or that work and how best to fulfill the existing assignments. I have always had a need

to consult with you and it always turned out better for the case. I saw in your face an older, experienced party leader on a large scale, talented, energetic and tireless, a wonderful friend and comrade, I will never forget your role in relations in a number of cases, and especially when they wanted to connect me with the events in Georgia (with so called the "Mingrelian case" - / B. S. /). And when Comrade Stalin died, I did not hesitate to call you, as well as other comrades, the Chairman of the Government, and that I considered and still consider this the only correct one. In the future, I became even more convinced of this, that it was you who would successfully lead together with the leading team of the Central Committee and the Government. Therefore, my tragedy is that, as I said above, for over ten years we were real Bolshevik friends, worked with soul in a variety of difficult working conditions, were in difficult bindings, and no one upset our friendship, so valuable and necessary for me, and now solely through my fault, has lost everything that connected us. I want to say a few words about my comrades.

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich! I have always had an excellent even attitude towards you, while working in the Transcaucasus, we all highly valued you, considered you a faithful disciple of Lenin and a faithful Companion of Stalin, the second person after Comrade Stalin, this could clearly be seen in relation to you of the Transcaucasian organization. If you ask my family, they can tell you a lot of good things about you from my words. After moving to Moscow, except for cases, if you remember Maltsev - who worked in the Archive and Slezberg - which were conducted on the direct orders of Comrade Stalin (meaning N.V. Maltsev and A. Ya. Slezberg, who were required to testify against Zhemchuzhina and subsequently shot. - / B. S. /), which, obviously, Comrade Anastas Ivanovich and some others can confirm, I do not know of a single case, so that I can be reproached against you. On the contrary, you remember very well when it was very bad at the beginning of the war, and after our conversation with Comrade Stalin at his nearby dacha, you raised the question point-blank in your office in the Council of Ministers that it was necessary to save the situation, we must immediately organize a center that would lead then the defense of our homeland, I fully supported you then and suggested that you immediately summon Comrade G.M. Malenkov to a meeting, and after a short period of time other members of the Politburo who were in Moscow also approached. After this meeting, we all went to Comrade Stalin and convinced him of the immediate organization of the Committee for the Defense of the Country with all rights. Joint work in the Committee Your exclusive role in the field of foreign policy. Your excellent attitude towards me when I was at conferences (I told many comrades about this) in Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam, where, as you know, I was not a delegate, but was by the nature of my work, although you

insisted.

I would cite other facts, but I will say one thing that I have said more than once,

whoever quarrels Molotov with Stalin is committing a monstrous crime against our country and our party. I think that comrade Malenkov G.M. can confirm this. and Mikoyan A.I. and others. Very often, earlier, and more recently, Comrade Stalin called Malenkov G.M. his pimps. and me, meaning you and Mikoyan.

Kliment Efremovich! I'll start the same with Transcaucasia, we loved you dearly, I, on behalf of the leading bodies of Georgia, went specially to Moscow to the Central Committee and Comrade Stalin and insisted on sending you in connection with the fifteenth anniversary of Soviet Georgia.

At the beginning of the war, Comrade Stalin strongly scolded me and called me a political coward when I proposed to appoint, in the difficult times that our Motherland is going through, the well-known throughout the country, you and Budyonny, commanders of the fronts. He scolded him, and a little later, Comrade Stalin carried out the appointment. This I think comrades will confirm. With Comrade Malenkov G.M. very often we talked among ourselves and with other comrades about the proposal to comrade Stalin to appoint you chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and only now this has been carried out. You can't say everything.

Nikita Sergeevich! Except for the last incident at the Presidium of the Central Committee, where you strongly and angrily scolded me, with which I fully agree, we have always been great friends. I have always been proud that you are an excellent Bolshevik and an excellent comrade, and I have told you about this more than once, when I managed to talk about it, I also told Comrade Stalin. I have always treasured your attitude.

Nikolai Alexandrovich! I have never done anything wrong to you anywhere. He helped honestly and as best he could. T. Malenkov G.M. and I spoke about you to Comrade Stalin more than once, as a wonderful comrade and a Bolshevik. When Comrade Stalin suggested that we re-establish the order of presidency, I, Art. Malenkov G.M. they convinced that this was not necessary, that you were doing the job, and we would help anyway.

Lazar Moiseevich and Anastas Ivanovich. Both of you have known me for a long time. Anastas sent me back in 1920 from Baku for illegal work in Georgia. Then even the Menshevik. On behalf of the Caucasian Bureau of the RCP and the Revolutionary Military Council of the KhT Army. Lazar has known me since 1927, and I will never forget the help given to me in party work in Transcaucasia, when you were secretary of the Central Committee. Much could be said during my time in Moscow. But I will say one thing: I have always seen your principled attitude, help in work and friendship, for my part I did everything I could.

Comrades Pervukhin and Saburov said that I had a privileged position during the life of comrade Stalin, but this is not true. Georgy, you know this better than anyone else, and the other members of the Presidium also know this. In fact, when I worked in Transcaucasia, and then in Georgia, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and Comrade Stalin strongly supported and helped in my work, and the work went well, and I personally was delighted. But soon after the transfer to Moscow, when a little order was restored in the Ministry of Internal Affairs after Yezhov, Comrade Stalin separated the MGB from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and transferred a special department to the People's Commissariat of Defense. And only at the beginning of the war, when it was necessary to stop the fleeing - our retreating troops, was re-united, could the Ministry of Internal Affairs - returned the Special Department from the People's Commissariat of Defense and after the work done to stop the fleeing troops, when several tens of thousands of deserters were shot, barrage detachments were created and etc. -

again allocated to the MGB. T-scham, who worked closely in the Politburo, because they are well aware of this. As for my attitude towards Comrade Saburov, Comrade Malenkov G.M. and I defended him in the post of Chairman of the State Planning Commission, and Comrade Pervukhin, of course, on merit, I introduced and led the Hero of Socialist Labor.

All this, perhaps, I should not have written in my position, but I ask you to forgive me. Dear George, I ask you to understand me, that you know me better than others. I just lived, how best to make, of course, within my capabilities together with you the Mighty and Glorious Country, to think differently about me is simply unacceptable to my head. Of course, after all that has happened, I must be firmly called to order, pointed out my place and firmly pulled up so that I can be remembered for the rest of my life, but understand, dear comrades, I am a faithful son of our Motherland, a faithful son of the party of Lenin and Stalin and your faithful friend and comrade. Wherever you want, for any job, the smallest, send, take a closer look, I can still work faithfully for ten years and will work with all my heart and with all my energy. I say from the bottom of my heart that it's not true that since I held a big post, I won't be fit for another small job, it's very easy to check in any region and region, state farm, collective farm, construction site, and I beg you, don't deprive me of being an active builder on any small plot of our glorious Motherland, and you will be convinced that in 2-3 years I will be strongly corrected and will be still useful to you. I am devoted to our beloved Party and our Soviet Government to the last breath."

At the end of the letter, Lavrenty Pavlovich admitted: "T-shchi, I apologize that I write not quite coherently and badly due to my condition, and also because of the weakness of the light and the lack of pince-nez (glasses)."

In the draft of this letter, Beria noted that "I am now in such a state that I can be forgiven for having to write like this," and claimed that he raised the question of normalizing relations with Yugoslavia on the advice of Malenkov.

The leitmotif of this letter to Malenkov is "I found my happiness in our friendship and joint work with you." And again: "Now we will always be together. They will remember me, they will remember you." But Georgy Maksimilianovich hardly believed the flattery forced by the real threat of execution. And, probably, he read the "confession of an ardent communist" with a grin. He already knew well the price of Beria's now declared love for Stalin. And he perfectly understood that, like the rest of the members of the Presidium, Lavrenty Pavlovich thought only of two things - a career and the preservation of his own skin, which Stalin could pull off at any moment. The bureaucratic ode about how they, together with Beria, "did not know other interests, except how to better fulfill the existing instructions," hardly impressed Georgy Maximilianovich. Malenkov certainly knew that "friend Lavrenty" in the minutes free from fulfilling orders had time to pay attention to the fair sex. And the fact that his closeness to Beria, real in the past, in the future, if Lavrenty Pavlovich is convicted, could become a compromising fact in the hands of Malenkov, in the hands of his rivals, the same Khrushchev, for example, Georgy Maksimilianovich obviously did not think at that moment. And in vain. Maybe he remembered "friend Lavrenty" when in 1957 he went into political oblivion, but it was too late.

There was no answer. On July 2, Beria wrote his last letter, addressing

immediately to all the "dear comrades" from the Presidium of the Central Committee: "... They want to deal with me without trial or investigation, after 5 days of imprisonment, without a single interrogation, I beg you all to prevent this, I ask for immediate intervention, otherwise it will be late.

Dear comrades, I urge you to appoint the most responsible and strict commission for a strict investigation of my case, headed by Comrade Molotov or Comrade Voroshilov. Surely a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee does not deserve to have his case carefully examined, charged, demanded an explanation, witnesses interrogated. From all points of view this is good for the cause and for the Central Committee. Why do it the way it is now, they put me in the basement, and no one finds out or asks anything. Dear comrades, perhaps the only and correct way to resolve without trial and clarify the case against a member of the Central Committee and his comrade after 5 days of imprisonment in the basement is to execute him.

Once again I beg you all, especially the comrades who worked with comrades Lenin and comrade Stalin, enriched with great experience and wise in resolving the complex cases of comrades Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich and Mikoyan. In the name of the memory of Lenin and Stalin, I ask, I beg you to intervene, and you will all make sure that I am absolutely clean, honest, your faithful friend and comrade, a faithful member of our party.

Apart from strengthening the power of our country and the unity of our great party, I had no thoughts. I supported my Central Committee and my Government no less than any other comrades and did everything I could. I affirm that all charges will be dropped, if only you want to investigate it. What a rush, and a suspicious one at that.

T. Malenkov and Comrade Khrushchev, please do not persist. Wouldn't it be bad if t-shcha rehabilitate. Again and again I beg you to intervene and not to destroy your innocent old friend.

Lavrenty Pavlovich at that moment seriously feared that in the very near future, perhaps in the next few hours, he would be killed right in the concrete basement without trial or investigation. Now he decided to deny everything and insist on his complete innocence. And from the shock associated with the arrest and five-day imprisonment in complete isolation, it seems that he lost his real perception of reality. Only this can explain Beria's belief that he is going to be killed by villainous jailers who act without the knowledge of the "old comrades" from the Central Committee. Malenkov, Khrushchev and other members of the Presidium knew as well as the arrested man that he had not prepared any conspiracy. And therefore, none of them was going to conduct an investigation, let alone "rehabilitate a comrade."

Beria did not write any more letters. They stopped giving him a pencil or paper.

Sergo Beria was convinced that his father was killed immediately after the arrest, and the arrest itself did not take place in the meeting room of the Presidium of the Central Committee, but in the mansion on Malaya Nikitskaya Street, where Lavrenty Pavlovich lived:

Around noon on June 26, 1953. - /B. S./) in the office of Boris Lvovich Vannikov ... my father's closest assistant in atomic affairs, the bell rang. Test pilot Ahmet-Khan Sultan called ...

- Sergo, - shouts, - there was a shootout at your house. Did you understand everything? You

Gotta run, Sergo! We will help...

We really had a squadron, and it was not difficult to hide, say, in Finland or Sweden. And later I was convinced more than once that these pilots are real friends ... But what does it mean to run away in such a situation? If the father is arrested, the escape is more proof of his guilt...

When we drove up (to the mansion. - /B.S./), we didn't notice anything unusual from the side of the street, but there were two armored personnel carriers in the courtyard ... Internal security did not let us through ... Father was not at home ... When I was returning to the car, I heard from one of the guards: "Sergo, I saw someone being carried out on a stretcher, covered with a tarpaulin..." Over time, I found other witnesses who confirmed that they had seen those stretchers.. .

In 1958, I met with Shvernik, a member of that same L.P. trial. Beria. - /B. S. /) ... Motu, he says, I can tell you one thing: I never saw your father alive. Understand as you know, I will not say anything more.

Another member of the court, Mikhailov, also made it clear to me when we met at a dacha near Moscow that a completely different person was sitting in the courtroom, but he could not talk about this topic ...

Why has no one ever shown either me or my mother at least one interrogation sheet signed by my father?

There is no secret for me why my father was killed. Considering that he was dealing with politicians, my father suggested that his comrades-in-arms convene a party congress, or at least an expanded Plenum of the Central Committee, where they could talk about what the people had long been waiting for. Father believed that the entire leadership of the country should tell - openly and honestly! - about what happened in the thirties, forties, early fifties, about his behavior during the period of mass repressions. When, I remember, he said this shortly before his death at home, my mother warned: "Consider, Lavrenty, that this is your end. They will never forgive you for this ..." ""

Sergei Lavrentievich's assumption that his father was killed on the day of his arrest is easily refuted by Beria's prison letters preserved in the archive. But as for the interrogation protocols ... Perhaps, as we will see below, there really lies the key to unraveling the mystery of Beria's death. However, first it should be emphasized that historians published fragments of several protocols of interrogations of the "Lubyansk Marshal" during the investigation. ON THE. Zenkovich, for example, cites interrogations that took place on July 23 and August 7 and concerned the authorship of the book "On the Question of the History of Bolshevik Organizations in Transcaucasia." Beria was accused of embezzling someone else's manuscript, published in 1935 under his name. Lavrenty Pavlovich pleaded not guilty. He insisted that "this report (made by Beria at a meeting of the Tbilisi Party organization in July 35th. - / B. S. /) was prepared on my initiative, I was the main participant in the preparation of materials for the report, the IMEL branch of the city helped me in collecting materials Tbilisi. About 20 people took part in the preparation of this report, and about 100 people were accepted by the former participants of that time. I deny that I did this with the aim of ingratiating myself with Stalin. I considered it absolutely necessary to publish such a work ... "

At the next interrogation, Beria was asked about the fate of one of the creators of the report, the former head of the propaganda department of the Transcaucasian Regional Party Committee, Eric Bedia, whose arrest was allegedly caused by his statement during a friendly party that it was not Beria, but he, Bedia, who wrote the ill-fated report. Lavrenty Pavlovich denied that he ordered the arrest of Bedia because of his careless statement. Beria also denied that he knew about the execution of Bedia by the verdict of the troika.

Then Beria was presented with a statement by the former head of the department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, Kalo Oragvelidze, which allegedly served as the basis for initiating a case against Bedia: that it was not Sef, but he himself, Bedia, made this report, which was read by L. Beria. But Lavrenty Pavlovich still denied that he had arrested Bedia out of revenge: "I did not give instructions about the arrest, but they reported to me about the Beria case, probably Goglidze reported."

Rudenko continued:

"- From the case of Bedia it is seen that he was accused of preparing to commit a terrorist act against you?

- For the first time I hear, - Beria was surprised.

- Why was the Bedia case not sent to court and on what basis was it sent to the troika for out-of-court consideration? the prosecutor inquired.

"I hear it for the first time," Beria assured. He also denied that he had previously known about the extrajudicial execution of Bedia.

At the trial, Lavrenty Pavlovich stated: "Several people undertook to write the book 'History of the Bolshevik organizations in Transcaucasia', but no one wrote. Bedia and other persons compiled a book, and I made a report on it. Then this book was published under my authorship. This I did wrong. But this is a fact, and I admitted it. Bedia was connected with Lominadze. On the basis of these data, he was arrested and shot. But this is in no way connected with his participation in compiling the book ... "

In an effort to refute Beria, a member of the court, Moskalenko, read out the testimony of Chekist Savitsky, who took part in the arrest of Bedia: "Bedia not only knew about the arrest of Bedia, but he, Bedia, was arrested on his orders. Before his arrest, Bedia worked as an editor of the Kommunist newspaper and without sanction Beria, Bedia could not have been arrested."

That the editor of Kommunist could not be arrested without Beria's sanction is the absolute truth. This position was included in the nomenclature of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, and the first secretary Beria was obliged to endorse the arrest lists for this category of workers. But the same Savitsky testified during the investigation that Bedia was really connected with Lominadze and other rightists. So, most likely, Bedia was shot for a right-wing deviation, and by no means for excessive talkativeness about the creative history of the book about the first Bolshevik organizations in the Transcaucasus. In the same way, another chatterer Sef could well have been shot as a Zinovievist, and not as the true author of the book "On the History of the Bolshevik Organizations in Transcaucasia."

Why did the investigation and the court pay so much attention to a trifling, in essence, question: did Beria himself write the ill-fated book. After all, Lavrenty Pavlovich was charged with much more serious things: treason, conspiracy, intent to commit a terrorist attack, before which the accusation of plagiarism simply faded. Why did they cling to the book so much? Here's why. Accusations of plagiarism, as well as moral corruption, were very good for subsequent dissemination among the broad party and non-party masses. If only because they corresponded, albeit in part, to the truth. The allegations of conspiracy were very vague. There were simply no facts. Therefore, a version about the conspiracy was launched into the people (which had nothing to do with

reality), as if Khrushchev and Malenkov preempted Beria at the last moment, then literally the next day the Minister of the Interior was going to arrest the entire Presidium of the Central Committee at the Bolshoi Theater.

If you look at this case from today's standpoint, then there is nothing unusual in the case of a report on the history of the Bolshevik organizations in Transcaucasia. Already Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko, this is now known for sure, speeches were written by teams of "speechwriters", officially called "consultants". True, Stalin seemed to write his speeches himself. But where is the guarantee that, for example, the same Malenkov or Zhdanov were not helped in writing reports and speeches by assistants and other employees of the apparatus. And Beria was probably helped not only by Bedia, but by the whole team of the Georgian IMEL to create an immortal report. If desired, a similar accusation could be presented, if not to all, then to many of the accusers of the "Lubyansk Marshal". But everything that came to hand was suitable against Lavrenty Pavlovich, since it was rather difficult to confirm the main charge of conspiracy even with false testimony. Neither the prosecutor nor his party mentors could even come up with a plausible scenario for a "Beria coup." Bedia could have been shot not at all because of the book, and not even for connection with the rightists, but, so to speak, according to their position - Stalin and Yezhov deducted most of the officials at the head level. department of the Republican Central Committee or regional party committee. Beria, probably, had no desire to delete a chatty ally from the execution list.

In a letter from Nina Teimurazovna Beria, written to Khrushchev from Butyrskaya prison on January 7, 1954, it was never mentioned that during interrogations the investigators at least once referred to the testimony of her husband. Beria's widow claimed: "... A really terrible accusation falls on me that for more than thirty years (since 1922) I was Beria's wife and bore his name. At the same time, until the day of his arrest, I was devoted to him, belonged to his public and with great respect for his state position and blindly believed that he was a devoted, experienced and necessary person for the Soviet state (he never gave me any reason or reason to think otherwise, in a single word). I was told during the investigation, but in this case he deceived not only me, but the entire Soviet people, who, judging by his social position and positions, also trusted him.

Based on his useful activity, I spent a lot of work and energy in caring for his health (in his youth, he was ill with lungs,

later by the kidneys) (the wording is wonderful: it turns out that it was not love that moved Nina Teimurazovna in her care for her husband, but only the awareness of party duty - it is necessary to create the proper conditions for the work of a valuable cadre; if here we have not the usual trick to diminish our "guilt" as "a member of the family of an enemy of the people," one can guess why Lavrenty Pavlovich liked to go to the left. - /B.S./). For all the time of our life together, I saw him at home only in the process of eating or sleeping, and since 1942, when I learned from him about his adultery, I refused to be his wife. During the investigation, Lavrenty Pavlovich testified that he "had contracted syphilis during

war, it seems, in 1943, and underwent a course of treatment "; perhaps, in connection with the illness, the wife found out about the countless love tricks of her missus. - / B. S. /) and lived from 1943 outside the city and at first alone, behind then with my son's family. During this time, I suggested to him more than once, in order to create normal conditions for him, to divorce me in order to marry a woman who, perhaps, will love him and agree to be his wife. refused, arguing that without me he could somehow get out of the rut of life for a certain time. Believing in the power of a person's habit, I stayed at home so as not to disturb his family and give him the opportunity when he wants it, I came to terms with my disgraceful position in the family so as not to negatively affect his performance, which I considered directed not hostile, but necessary and useful.

I did not know anything about his immoral acts towards the family, which I was also told about during the investigation. She considered his betrayal of me, as a wife, to be accidental and partly blamed herself, since during these years I often went to my son, who lived and studied in another city.

Nina Teimurazovna's statement that she has not lived with her husband for the last eleven years is quite possibly true. Although here she could exaggerate the degree of her estrangement with her husband somewhat in order to try to avoid being involved in his case as an accomplice. But on this account there is also evidence of one of Lavrenty Pavlovich's mistresses, Nina Vasilievna Alekseeva (nee Chermenskaya). The artist of the Radio Committee, who had previously performed in the NKVD ensemble, she agreed to enter into a relationship with Beria, hoping to somehow help her arrested husband, NKVD colonel Ivan Rebrov, who disappeared without a trace at the end of the war. In addition, she was afraid that the refusal would bring trouble not only to her, but also to her then husband, naval officer Dmitry Alekseev. Nina Vasilievna describes the first meeting with Lavrenty Pavlovich, which took place on August 10, 1952, in Beria's mansion on Kachalova Street: "Beria took a few steps towards me, extended his hand; the shake was gentle.

- Hello. Good to see you, dear. He spoke with a slight Georgian accent, smiling slightly. - Many years ago I dreamed of meeting you. A lot of time has passed since then. I remember you as a very young girl. Probably, there is a fate - it still brought us together ...

Just a huge dining room. Now they would say: a banquet hall. Along the whole room, in the middle, there was a long table that could accommodate a lot of people ... Now the dining room was empty.

Symmetrically opposite each other, to the right and to the left, stood two huge - up to the ceiling - antique mirror dressing tables. On their stands are large crystal vases with live red carnations. The windows of the dining room overlooked Kachalova Street.

It was still light outside, the heavy brown drapes on the embossed windows parted. The drapes were matched to the color of the walls, which were paneled in oak, also brown.

About a quarter of the table was served. Cold snacks in small portions: hot smoked sturgeon, salmon, black caviar, salads and sauces, something else. The dishes were beautifully decorated

greens: parsley, dill, cilantro, some other Caucasian herbs. All the dishes were laid out in porcelain plates. "From an old service," I determined. Vase with tangerines and apples. In the middle of these exquisite dishes were two bottles in woven forms with gilded labels, sealed with red sealing wax. Next to the bottles lay a large open box of chocolates.

Everything indicated that the owner of the mansion loves not only gourmet food, but also the fact that aesthetics and beauty are present in its presentation."

From this description it is clear that Lavrenty Pavlovich was not only a great gourmet, but also had a good aesthetic taste (there were problems with ethics). And he obviously did not look like a monster even in the eyes of a woman who gave herself to him only under duress, fearing that otherwise he might erase her into camp dust. But it seems that Beria had, as they say, the most serious intentions about Nina Vasilievna. He generally claimed that he was divorced. This was an exaggeration, but, in any case, it can serve as confirmation that he had not lived with Nina Teimurazovna for a long time.

The wine that Beria treated his mistress turned out to be from the royal cellars of Novorossiysk. Even traditional dishes had a Georgian influence: fried black grouse with a very piquant taste, crab salad with walnut sauce. And Lavrenty Pavlovich's favorite jam was dogwood...

Beria showed an undoubted taste not only in cooking, but in the sphere of beauty. He told Alekseeva that he liked trophy Hollywood films, in particular, "Waterloo Bridge" and "The Big Waltz" (he generally called the latter "a chic film"). Beria admitted: "This eternal theme of art is love. And when beautiful actors embody the neck ... And the director is magnificent there. And the music of Strauss? Remember the waltz "Tales of the Vienna Woods"?"

Lavrenty Pavlovich turned out to be no stranger to vocals, telling the singer of the Radio Committee choir: "And our marshal is dashing, Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov. He is a good singer, he takes singing lessons from the people's artist Nezhdanova. But I didn't practice my voice, although I loved to sing, and, they say he did it well. In my youth, my friends predicted the future of a singer on stage for me. However, this profession seemed unsuitable to me. And I decided to take up a more serious business, useful for the country. "

Alekseeva was amazed: "An erudite, intelligent person ... who loves flowers, painting, cinema, who knows how to accept

a woman who enthusiastically talks about art - and the executioner, the personification of evil, the head of the sinister department in the Lubyanka at that moment - is no longer the head. - /ÿ. S./), before whom the whole country trembles in horror. How to combine it?

The same problem of combining the erudition, ingenuity and managerial genius of Lavrenty Pavlovich with his executioner's deeds has been trying to be solved by historians and publicists for half a century now. They are hindered in its decision by a deeply rooted idea of the incompatibility of genius and villainy. Well, an executioner cannot subtly appreciate art or be a good administrator! The life and fate of Beria serves as another refutation of this flat truth. And at the same time he proves that the most dangerous time for the executioner is when he

is going to abandon the executioner's craft and make life in the country at least a little better.

But in bed, Lavrenty Pavlovich did not at all prove himself a sexual giant. Nina Vasilievna recalls: "Greedy, impatient kisses, touches of strong hot hands on my body.

Everything swam in my eyes, the room was filled with fog, I, shrinking into an insensible lump, seemed about to lose consciousness. I was completely at the mercy of the person to whom I fell into a trap.

When the passions of Lavrenty Pavlovich subsided - and this happened soon enough - he got ready to leave.

I, perhaps somewhat tactlessly, asked:

- Where is your wife?

- We do not live together, - after some pause the answer followed; there was harshness in Beria's voice.

And he told me that he was officially divorced from his wife (here Lavrenty Pavlovich lied. But it seems that as one of the options he had in store a divorce from Nina Teimurazovna and marriage to Nina Vasilyevna - he apparently fell deeply into the latter . - /ÿ. S./)...

- You are both Nina, - said Beria, - both are beautiful. And equally cold in temperament. Yes, beauty can be deceiving... Our name Nina is sacred. There was such a ruler, Saint Nina, an educator of Georgia, a courageous woman, a warrior."

Soon, the seriousness of Lavrenty Pavlovich's intentions regarding Alekseeva herself was confirmed by Beria's adjutant Rafael Semenovich Sarkisov, whose duty it was to supply women to the boss: "Do not refuse meetings with Lavrenty Pavlovich. personality. And a great personality! He likes you, he is waiting for you. I do not advise you to upset such a person. He works hard. You will decorate his life and you will be provided with everything. "

I note that then, in the 52nd, Lavrenty Pavlovich was really

big personality. In the sense that it weighed much more than a centner. Here it is necessary to make a reservation that Beria gained weight only in the last years of the war and in the post-war years. Prior to that, judging by the photographs, it did not differ in particular completeness. Probably because his life before coming to Moscow was quite ascetic. Only later did the Kremlin rations and packages allow the new chief of the NKVD to satisfy his passion for gluttony in excess.

But in terms of sex, Beria did not arouse Alekseeva's enthusiasm: "Maybe earlier, in his youth or with other women, he was not like that. But with me ... An ordinary man, I must add, of advanced age. He still needed it for self-assertion.

Moreover, Lavrenty Pavlovich was tidy, clean, he always had fresh linen on. He never took off his nightgown, perhaps embarrassed to show me his no longer young body. And the sheets and pillowcases on the bed were fresh and starched every time. And in the mornings, a fragrant hot bath awaited me... Lavrenty Pavlovich wanted to see in me not only a lover, but someone else...

But most importantly for me - we were incompatible. And not even in a physical sense. Rebrov stood between us, ruined in the dungeons of the NKVD (now I have established myself in this), between us was my whole personal life, and the center of it was my beloved Dmitry Alekseev ... "

By the way, Beria could remain in a shirt during a sexual act for another reason. According to the most conservative Eastern tradition, common among Georgian peasants, spouses should not see each other's bodies during sex. If this was the reason, then in terms of the variety of sexual games, Beria was certainly inferior not only to the legendary Don Juan, but also to the very real Yagoda, one of his predecessors as head of the NKVD, who, during a search, found a whole arsenal of auxiliary love means.

Nina Vasilievna remained convinced that it was Beria who killed her husband, Colonel Ivan Rebrov, in order to open the way to an affair with her, whom he noticed at the end of the war in the NKVD ensemble. However, strictly speaking, there is still no evidence that Lavrenty Pavlovich did this. Rebrov, who was in charge of supplying partisan detachments, could be arrested by both the NKGB and SMERSH. The first was headed by a friend of Beria Merkulov, and in this case, Lavrenty Pavlovich could, if desired, organize an arrest. The head of military counterintelligence, Abakumov, was one of Beria's most dangerous enemies, and if Rebrov's arrest was carried out on his orders, then this action can be considered more likely as directed against the "Lubyansk Marshal" in the hope of getting dirt on him from one of Beria's close employees. Fortunately, it was not difficult to invent a pretext for arrest - it is unlikely that all the supplies received by the partisans were strictly documented. Without access to the investigation file of State Security Colonel Ivan Andreevich Rebrov, it is impossible to say which of the listed versions is true. Moreover, against another husband of Nina Vasilievna, Dmitry Alekseev, Beria did not use any repressions, but, using his power as the first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, who oversaw the Military-Industrial Complex, he sent the deputy head of the financial department of the Navy, captain 1st rank Dmitry Vasilyevich Alekseev, to long-term business trips.

By the way, Rebrov spoke to Alekseeva about Beria: "He understands very well that the "socialism" that is being built in our country has nothing to do with genuine socialism. Beria's task is to provide the "great construction projects" of Comrade Stalin with slave labor, whether mass repressions, and countless concentration camps. For all this "work" the Owner received from the Chief unlimited rights and resources, which he uncontrollably disposes of, naturally, without forgetting his own interests. This is a hypocritical and power-hungry person, flattering towards the Chief and - very dangerous".

There is no doubt that Lavrenty Pavlovich did not believe in socialist ideals for a long time and understood perfectly well that he lives in conditions of absolute dictatorship, cynically using the opportunities provided to him in his own interests, primarily to force cohabitation of the women he liked. At the same time, as we have already seen, immediately after the death of Stalin, he tried as

eliminate the "great construction projects" and significantly reduce the size of the camp population.

In the end, Alekseeva began to look at her powerful lover, if not with love, then with a certain sympathy: "He was too proud, proud, he, I felt, was the first to expect such confessions from me, which, according to him, he heard from other women and not only heard words, but whether I received love letters!! / - B.S. /).

as if holding him with one hand and pushing him away with the other. And she held, guided by the only feeling - fear ...

One thing is certain: Beria was not indifferent to me. I was more than just a lover to him. And, perhaps, thinking about his future life, in any case, at the first stages of our acquaintance, while he still knew nothing about Dmitry, he connected her with me ... Watching this man, thinking about him ... I was convinced: Beria is lonely. In his personal life, he is definitely alone. Of his relatives, only one person he spoke warmly about - but his son, Sergo. And this mansion itself on Kachalova Street was, as it were, the personification of the loneliness of its owner: always a mysterious silence in the rooms and around the house, always deserted, never any guests ...

From individual phrases, remarks, his mood when he met me, I admit that even at his terrible job he was alone and certainly did not trust anyone there. And he ... needed a woman, a faithful, loving girlfriend, who would be his rest, a refuge, where he, perhaps, would find understanding and justification for his work.

Dearest Nina Vasilievna did not even suspect that Beria was engaged in really terrible work, but which had nothing to do with the punitive department: he was making an atomic and hydrogen bomb. And as for the fact that Lavrenty Pavlovich knew nothing about Dmitry Alekseev, his wife, I think, was mistaken. Lavrenty Pavlovich probably, before rolling up with the most serious intentions, scouted out everything about her connections - fortunately, there was a KGB experience, and his people in the bodies, after the arrest of Abakumov, again entered into force and

ready to serve the boss. As for the seriousness of intentions, the fact that Beria introduced Alekseev to ... Stalin himself testifies in favor of such a hypothesis. This happened at a reception in the Kremlin on November 4, 1952. Nina Vasilievna was introduced to the guests as the wife of Colonel Sarkisov, next to whom she was sitting. But Stalin, quite possibly, Beria told the truth.

Alekseeva tried to offer instead of herself one of her friends from the Radio Committee, but Beria agreed to part with her only in April 53rd, after Stalin's death. It is possible that Stalin approved the choice of Lavrenty Pavlovich, and if Joseph Vissarionovich had lived at least a few months more, Beria would have divorced Nina Teimurazovna and married Nina Vasilievna, who in this case could not have been refused. But after the death of Generalissimo Lavrenty Pavlovich was no longer up to the arrangement of his personal life for the long term. He was captured by reforms and political struggle.

But Beria's loneliness at the place of his new service - in the united Ministry of Internal Affairs played a fatal role with him. It is felt that in the family he has a close

contact was only with Sergo. Probably, Lavrenty Pavlovich found it difficult to get along with people, and not only because of well-acquired professional suspicion, but also because of natural isolation.

By the way, when parting, Beria, among other things, gave Nina Vasilievna and her husband a warrant for a two-room apartment (they used to live in a communal apartment). However, Alekseeva, fortunately, was in no hurry to take the warrant in the Moscow City Council, she reached the arrest of her former lover, which saved her from being involved in the Beria case as a witness, and allowed her husband to continue to pursue a successful career.

And here is another testimony of one who was close to Lavrenty Pavlovich. It was not obtained during a very biased investigation in 1953, but is contained in the memoirs of the famous theater and film actress, popular performer of songs from films T.K. Okunevskaya, written 45 years after the death of Beria. Tatyana Kirillovna could not be interrogated in the 53rd, because, by the grace of Abakumov, she was in places not so remote. But, like those who testified to the investigators, she claims that Lavrenty Pavlovich took possession of her by force. Everything happened in the best traditions of the thriller: "... It's quite a miracle: I was invited to the Kremlin concert, to which only the people's Unions are invited, and then the chosen ones, loved by" them ", are the same; there are these concerts, as I was told, according to at night, after "their" meetings, meetings, in the form of entertainment. A member of the government of Beria, Boris (husband of Okunevskaya, writer Boris Leontievich Gorbakov. takes place shortly after the victory. - /B.S./).

Some unfamiliar feeling... fear of failure... no... something completely different... some anxiety.

The colonel got out of the car and put me in the back seat next to Beria, I immediately recognized him, I saw him at ... a reception in the Kremlin. He is cheerful, playful, quite ugly, flabby obese, nasty,

gray-white skin. It turned out that we were not going to the Kremlin right away, but had to wait in the mansion until the meeting was over. We enter. The colonel has disappeared. A set table with everything you can think of. I cringed, said that before the concert I didn't eat, let alone drink, and he didn't insist, like all Georgians, almost pouring wine into their bosoms. He began to eat ugly, greedily, with his hands, drink, chat, he asked me only to sip the "best of wines" delivered from Georgia. After a while, he got up and went out through one of the doors, without apologizing, without saying anything. Grave silence, not a sound can be heard even from the Garden Ring. I remembered this mansion, it is next to the Sound Recording House, on the corner of the Garden Ring, and I just recently passed here ... I looked around: the family house, I calmed down a bit. It's already three in the morning, we've been sitting at the table for two hours, I'm in a concert dress, I'm afraid to crush it, I'm sitting on the tip of a chair, he drinks wine, gets drunk, says vulgar compliments, some Koba hasn't seen me live yet, I ask who such a Koba...

- Ha! Ha! Don't you know who Koba is?! Ha! Ha! Ha! This is Joseph Vissarionovich.

Once again, he leaves the room. I know that all "they" work at night. Boris is always called to the Central Committee only at night, but I'm tired, I'm drooping. This time, having appeared, he announces that the meeting with "them" is over, but Joseph is so tired that he postponed the concert. I got up to go home. He said that now you can drink and that if I do not drink this glass, he will not let me go anywhere. I drank standing up. He put his arm around my waist and pushes me to the door, but not to the one through which he went out, and not to the one through which we entered, and, nasty sniffing in my ear, quietly says that it's late, that we need to rest a bit, that then he will take me home. All and failure. I woke up, silence, no one around, the door quietly opened, a woman appeared, silently opened the door to the bathroom, silently escorted me to the room in which dinner was laid yesterday, the same table floated into my mind, now laid for breakfast, a clock, ten o'clock in the morning, I should already be sitting at a rehearsal, I went, got out, got into a car parked at the entrance, came home, asked ... not to call me to the phone, no matter who called, no one to enter me.

She was raped, the irreparable happened, there are no feelings, there is no way out, the eyelids do not close even with a hand for a day.

Readers have sincere sympathy for the unfortunate victim, who was deceived into a trap, drugged with some kind of dope, and then raped. This story of Okunevskaya was also reflected in the novel by Vasily Aksenov "The Moscow Saga", where the main character, the famous singer Beria, is raped under exactly the same circumstances. But a careful reading of Okunevskaya's confession reveals a number of inconsistencies. Wasn't Tatyana Kirillovna surprised that Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria himself, the fourth person in the country, after Stalin, Molotov and Malenkov, would take her to the concert. This role is for some kind of adjutant, but not for a member of the GKO. And why "they", i.e., members of the Politburo, Stalin's closest associates, are sitting without Beria! After all, he is also one of them! Is the task of delivering the actress Tatyana Okunevskaya to the Kremlin concert more important than the state issues discussed at the Politburo! And did Tatyana Kirillovna really not understand from the very beginning where and why Lavrenty Pavlovich was taking her!

It is unlikely that Tatyana Kirillovna invented her connection with Beria. But I

I strongly suspect that everything was done by mutual agreement. It is possible that it was this connection that provided Okunevskaya with the rise of her song career in the first post-war period, touring the countries of Eastern Europe, where Soviet troops were stationed. Okunevskaya was imprisoned by the Minister of State Security Abakumov, because, as she claims, she rejected his harassment. This form of revenge, I note, is quite likely. Since Okunevskaya did not become Abakumov's mistress, her arrest of the Minister of State Security could not be compromised in any way. And her claims that Viktor Semenovitch harassed her, no one would simply believe.

Formally, Okunevskaya was accused of spying for Yugoslavia. At the time of her arrest, in November 1948, Stalin's relationship with Tito was worse than ever. But Tatyana Kirillovna had a short affair with the leader of Yugoslavia, and a longer, serious relationship with the Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow, General Popovich. But it is also possible that Abakumov knew about her connection with Beria, on occasion he hoped to get dirt on Beria through her, and then with

the need to create a high-profile case in which Lavrenty Pavlovich would appear as a Yugoslav spy who communicated with his masters through Okunevskaya. But in the end, Stalin chose to arrest Abakumov himself and keep Beria.

By the way, according to the researcher of the history of anti-Semitism in the USSR G.V. Kostyrchenko, Abakumov had similar plans in relation to other Beria passions: "Beria had ... many reasons to hate Abakumov. .A. Uleryanova, women of easy virtue".

In any case, the "immorality" drew rape and abuse of office as articles of abuse, but not treason. But these articles, due to their lack of solidity, were not even included in the indictment and sentence of the Special Judicial Presence. And it was dangerous to interrogate Beria on political matters. "Lubyansky Marshal" knew too much.

Beria's immoral behavior was a real find for his colleagues who overthrew him, since nothing significant could be found to support the version of the conspiracy. Yes, and in the previous activities of Lavrenty Pavlovich, it was not possible to find a special crime, by the standards of that time. At the July Plenum, Secretary of the Central Committee A.A. Andreev pleased those present with such a revelation: "Beria tried in every possible way to ensure that all members of the Politburo were marked with something, that they were spotted, and he, you see, is clean. And in fact, look, you can't present anything to him - he is clean. The members of the Central Committee laughed in unison. They guessed that it was not difficult for Malenkov, Molotov, Khrushchev and others to swim in shit without any help from Lavrenty Pavlovich.

Voroshilov also evoked sincere, healthy laughter from the plenum participants when he provided such evidence that Lavrenty Pavlovich did not enjoy authority among his subordinates - after Beria's arrest, not a single Chekist wrote a letter in his defense, which would say: "What have you done to our great leader, how are we going to get along without our Beria?.." Party leaders knew very well that there were no such letters

it was also when Beria's predecessors were arrested: Yagoda, Yezhov, Abakumov. And even if Stalin thought of sending Kliment Efremovich "to the headquarters of Tukhachevsky", not one of the commanders and commissars of the Red Army would dare to intercede for him.

Lavrenty Pavlovich also had real crimes: the repressions of innocent people in Georgia in the 30s, the execution of Polish officers in the 40s, the execution of Soviet generals and political prisoners in the 41s, the deportation of "punished peoples", thousands, tens of thousands of ruined lives (but still not hundreds of thousands, like Yezhov, and not millions, like the "Kremlin highlander"). However, he shared responsibility for all these crimes with Stalin and other party leaders. The heirs of the Generalissimo were not yet ready to stigmatize him for unjustified repressions, fearing to completely undermine the people's faith in communism.

Beria's colleagues in the Presidium of the CPC shed much more foreign blood than Lavrenty Pavlovich. Khrushchev, at the height of the terror, happened to head the Moscow Party organization, and from January 38th -

Ukrainian. Both had immeasurably more members, including senior officials, than in the Communist Party of Georgia subordinated to Beria. And the notorious troikas that sent people to their deaths usually consisted of the prosecutor, the head of the NKVD and the head of the local party organization. I wonder how many dozen times more people were on those execution lists that Nikita Sergeevich signed, compared to those on the conscience of Lavrenty Pavlovich in Georgia? However, having become the head of the NKVD, Beria caught up with Khrushchev in the pre-war and war years. Having come to power, Nikita Sergeevich, with the help of his man at the head of the KGB, I.A. Serov, tried to destroy his Moscow and Ukrainian lists. Only the speeches of Nikita Sergeevich, published in the press, remained. They are worth reading.

Back in January 1936, Khrushchev said in one of his speeches: "Only 308 people have been arrested; for our Moscow organization, this is not enough." And on August 22 of the same year, at a Moscow party activist, he touched on the process of Zinoviev and Kamenev: "... Comrade Stalin, his sharp Leninist eye ... always aptly pointed out the paths of our party, from where bastards could crawl out. We must shoot not only these scoundrels, but also Trotsky is also subject to execution ... "And he immediately called for reprisal against the son of one of the defendants, I.P. Bakaeva: "... At a Moscow factory ("Dukat"), a Bakaev's little snake worked, under his own name. And the party organization does not even know such odious names ... Since the name is Bakaev, then they should examine him under a magnifying glass ... Where is the vigilance ?.. One must be able to organize work, be able to take a person at gunpoint, study him quickly and bring the matter to the end ... "Here, Nikita Sergeyevich, taking Beria at gunpoint, quickly brought it to the end, that is, to execution.

In June 1938, at the KhPU Congress of Ukrainian Communists, Khrushchev called for finishing off the "enemies of the people": "... In Ukraine, almost all of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (b) U, with the exception of a few, turned out to be hostile. Yezhov came, and the real defeat. I think that now we will finish off the enemies in Ukraine ... "And in February 1940, when there were almost no "enemies" left in the wild, he urged not to lose vigilance: "Our enemies have not rested and will not rest as long as capitalist encirclement. This must be remembered. We in the Ukraine have cleaned up the enemies a lot. But some still remain. They feel lonely,

afraid to raise their heads, but they are. So you have to look at both."

Of the crimes of Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich, Nikita Sergeyevich, of necessity, enlightened in detail the Plenum of the Central Committee in June 1957, when he fought with the "anti-party group", and then at the XXII Party Congress. Mikoyan, close to Khrushchev, also managed to thoroughly clean the archives of traces of his own work in the field of eradicating "enemies of the people." But the mere fact that in 1937 he supervised the NKVD and delivered a keynote speech at the anniversary celebration in honor of the 20th anniversary of the Cheka speaks volumes.

"BLUE BEARD" FROM LUBYANKA

Beria's accusations of sexual promiscuity, I repeat, were very useful for his opponents. During the investigation, Lavrenty Pavlovich admitted:

"I easily got along with women, had numerous connections, short-lived. These women were brought to my house, I

never came. Sarkisov [10] and Nadaraya delivered them to me, [11] especially Sarkisov.

- At your direction, Sarkisov and Nadaraya kept lists of your mistresses, - said the USSR Prosecutor General R.A. Rudenko. - Do you confirm it?

"I confirm," Beria replied dejectedly.

- You are presented with nine lists in which 62 women appear, - the prosecutor denounced the former chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

- Most of the women, - Beria showed, - who appear on these lists, are my cohabitants. The lists were compiled over a number of years.

- Do you admit that you have turned your house into a den of debauchery, and your personal guards into pimps? Roman Andreevich suggested the correct answer to the defendant.

"I didn't turn the house into a brothel, and that Sarkisov and Nadaraya were used for pandering is a fact ... - Lavrenty Pavlovich partially admitted his guilt."

The only surviving list, which was maintained by the former head of the secretariat Beria Sarkisov, included the names of 39 women. Later, rumor increased this number to 500 and even 800, making Lavrenty Pavlovich a real sexual giant. Although, probably, women really liked Beria, and his party comrades, zealots of high morality, were gladly accused of it. At the July Plenum, Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU N.N. Shatalin stated: "The Presidium of the Central Committee instructed me in Beria's office in the Council of Ministers to find documents related to the activities of the former First Main Directorate ... Looking through the contents of safes and other places where documents can be stored, we came across things unusual for office offices and items. Along with documents, we found in large quantities all kinds of ... attributes of a women's toilet. Here are brief

excerpts from the inventory: ladies' tracksuits, ladies' blouses, ladies' stockings of foreign firms - 11 pairs, women's silk combinations - 11 pairs, ladies' silk tights - 7 pairs, cuts for ladies' dresses - 5 cuts, silk ladies' scarves, handkerchiefs of foreign firms, silk children's combinations, some more children's things, etc. etc., a whole list of 29 serial numbers. We have found numerous letters from women of the most intimate, I would say, vulgar content. We also found a large number of objects of a male libertine. These things speak for themselves, and, as they say, no comment is required."

The chaste Nikolai Nikolaevich did not, however, specify what kind of things from the libertine's arsenal that did not require comments were found in Beria's office. One can only assume that their list was not much different from the list of devices for debauchery found during a search of the first People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR G.G. Berries (there, however, the list consisted of several hundred names - in love for luxury, the first People's Commissar of Internal Affairs significantly surpassed Lavrenty Pavlovich): a collection of pornographic photographs - 3904 pieces; 11 pornographic films; a collection of smoking pipes and mouthpieces (ivory, amber, etc.), most of them pornographic - 165; rubber artificial penis - 1.

By the way, Yagoda equipped a home porno cinema in his country house. Maybe Lavrenty Pavlovich had something similar? Unfortunately, the protocol of what was seized from him after his arrest has not yet been published, and so far it is possible to judge what was found only by Shatalin's speech.

By the way, both items of women's clothing, as well as children's things from Genrikh Grigoryevich, as well as from Lavrenty Pavlovich, were confiscated in abundance: skirts - 13; foreign women's dresses - 27; foreign ladies' suits - 11; foreign ladies' silk tights - 70; shoes for ladies, foreign - 31 pairs; coats for women, foreign - 9; foreign children's toys - 101 sets. True, they found a lot of items of men's toilet at Yagoda. One underpants "Jäger" 26 pairs. I wonder if they found pants in Beria's office? Shatalin about it

silent. But
he reported curious details about the amorous adventures of Lavrenty Pavlovich: "...
For greater credibility of this side

case, I will read the testimony of a certain Sarkisov, who for 18 years worked in the protection of Beria. Recently, he was the head of security.

This is what this same Sarkisov showed: "I know of Beria's numerous connections with all kinds of random women. I know that through a certain citizen S. (let me not mention my last name) Beria was familiar (in the testimony, the last name is said) with S.'s girlfriend, whose last name I don't remember. She worked in the House of Models, later I heard from Abakumov that this friend S. was the wife of a military attaché. Later, while in Beria's office, I heard Beria call Abakumov on the phone and ask - why still not they put this woman in. That is, at first he lived, but

then he asks why they don't put him in jail (this is pure fiction, which allows you to suspect that Sarkisov wrote his "honest testimony" under the dictation of the investigators. Viktor Semenovitch and Lavrenty Pavlovich did not like each other, to put it mildly, but to put it more simply, tolerate each other Beria was not such a fool to demand, what to demand, even to ask Abakumov to imprison an annoying mistress, who, moreover, during the investigation could tell a lot of different things, which compromised him, Beria. Moreover, Abakumov did not obey Beria, but obeyed only to Stalin himself. - /Ÿ.S./).

In addition, I know that Beria cohabited with Maya, a student at the Institute of Foreign Languages. Subsequently, she became pregnant from Beria, she had an abortion. Beria also cohabited with an 18-20-year-old girl Lyalya. She had a child from Beria, with whom she lived in the country (obviously, the daughter of this Lyalya was the future wife of the son of Politburo member V.V. Grishin mentioned by Sergo Beria. I note that when editing the text of the transcript, Shatalin specified: "with whom she is now lives in the former dacha of Obruchnikov. - / B. S. /).

While in Tbilisi, Beria cohabited with citizen M., after cohabitation with Beria M., a child was born, whom, at the direction of Beria, I, together with the envoy Vitonov, were taken and handed over to an orphanage in Vg. Moscow.

I also know that Beria cohabited with a certain Sophia, the phone is such and such, he lives on such and such a street, the house is such and such. At the suggestion of Beria, she had an abortion in the medical unit (when editing the transcript, Shatalin specified that the abortion was done through the head of the medical unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Voloshin. - /B.S./). I repeat that Beria had many similar connections.

At the direction of Beria, I started a whole list of women with whom he cohabited. (Laughter in the hall.) Subsequently, I destroyed this list. However, one list has been preserved (risen like a phoenix from the ashes? / - B.S. /), this list contains the names, phone numbers of 25-27 such women. This list is in my apartment in my tunic pocket. [12]

A year or a year and a half ago, I definitely found out about Beria's connections with prostitutes (as he writes). He suffered from syphilis, he was treated by a doctor of the Ministry of Internal Affairs such and such. Signature - Sarkisov.

Here it is necessary to make a reservation that prostitution in the USSR did not formally exist at that moment. And the fact that Beria had connections with prostitutes, Sarkisov, it seems, concluded only on the basis that his boss had syphilis. The edited transcript on this occasion stated quite clearly: "A year or a year and a half ago, I definitely found out that as a result of his connections with prostitutes, he was ill with syphilis." It is curious that prostitutes are here in the plural, although he probably only contracted syphilis from one woman. And immediately it is necessary to make a reservation that Lavrenty Pavlovich could easily catch a bad disease both on a professional priestess of love and on a lover who had sex not for the sake of money, but only for pleasure.

Shatalin's final conclusion sounded very pathetic: "Here, comrades, is the true face of this applicant, so to speak, for the leadership of the Soviet people. And this dirty pug dared to compete with our party, with our Central Committee (which, perhaps, with its sluggishness really resembled an elephant. - /Y.S./). This most filthy man tried to bring discord into the ranks of our Presidium, into the ranks of the Central Committee of our Party, to introduce mistrust, that is, to violate the very thing that makes our Party strong. But this man failed and no one. At a time when our Central Committee, when all the people, our entire Party, the Presidium of our Central Committee are as united as ever, no one will be able to prevent the construction or fulfillment of the plans that Comrade Lenin and Comrade Stalin bequeathed to us.

I, comrades, believe, and all of us together, apparently, believe that with the help of the members of the Central Committee, our Central Committee and the Presidium of the Central Committee, having cleansed itself of filth, having driven out this provocateur or adventurer from their ranks, I would say, having liberated themselves from him, now without interference, let's all go forward together even more united, and fulfill the precepts that were given to us by Comrade Lenin and Comrade Stalin. "The image of a scoundrel libertine was intended to set off the revealing pathos, since nothing more or less specific to impute Beria failed.

Undoubtedly, the formidable owner of the Lubyanka had his admirers. But often the partners were brought to his mansion by force, and sometimes they were ordinary prostitutes who were paid at the prevailing market rates - from 100 to 250 rubles per visit. So, at least, some publicists claim, in particular, Kirill Stolyarov, referring to the testimony of Sarkisov and Nadarai, contained in the still secret case of Beria. However, it is not clear why then in the testimony of Sarkisov, which Shatalin read out at the July plenum, it was only about his assumptions that Beria knew prostitutes, only on the basis that Lavrenty Pavlovich had contracted syphilis.

Confessions of several victims of Beria's lust were sewn to the case. Here is one of them: "I tried to evade his harassment, asked Beria not to touch me, but Beria said that philosophy was useless here, and took possession of me. I was afraid to resist him, because I was afraid that Beria might imprison my husband. ..only a scoundrel can use the dependent position of the wife of a subordinate in order to take possession of her ... "(it looks very much like, I note, the story of Nina Alekseeva). And here is the schoolgirl's story, the most terrible of all: "Once I went to the store for bread along Malaya Nikitskaya Street. At that time, an old man in pince-nez got out of the car, a colonel in the uniform of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was with him. When the old man began to examine me, I was frightened and ran away... The next day... a colonel came to us, who turned out to be Sarkisov. comrade, a very great worker, very kind, who loves children very much and helps all the sick. At 5-6 o'clock in the evening on May 7, 1949, an old man in pince-nez, that is, Beria, came in. He greeted me affectionately, said that cry, my mother will be cured and everything will be fine. We were given lunch. I believed that this kind person would help me in such a difficult time for me (my grandmother died and my mother was dying).

was 16 years old. I was in 7th grade. Then Beria took me to his bedroom and raped me. It is difficult to describe my state after what happened. They didn't let me out of the house for three days. Sarkisov sat for a day, Beria for the night. "At the trial, a man who looked like Lavrenty Pavlovich admitted in his last word that he had committed a crime by having an intimate relationship with a minor, but denied that it was rape.

There were also funny cases. One of Lavrenty Pavlovich's mistresses allegedly stated during interrogation: "Beria offered me intercourse in an unnatural way, which I refused. Then he offered another, also unnatural way, to which I agreed." This unsolvable puzzle came into being thanks to the amazing chastity of Soviet investigators, who did not dare to trust the paper with what methods of sex the hero-lover from Malaya Nikitskaya tempted his passion. By the way, some of the testimony of Beria's girlfriends inspire serious doubts. For example, one of them, an artist of the Radio Committee M., whom, by the way, Lavrenty Pavlovich helped to get an apartment in Moscow, claimed that their last meeting took place on June 24 or 25, 1953, and Beria asked M. for the next meeting, scheduled in three

day, come along with a friend. However, due to the arrest of the "Lubyanka Marshal", the meeting did not take place. But, as we remember, on the eve of his fall, Beria spent ten days in the fraternal GDR, where he put things in order with an iron hand, and returned to Moscow only on the morning of the 26th, having gone straight from the airfield to the fateful meeting. Therefore, he could not meet with any of his mistresses the day before. He has, as they say, a 100% alibi. Perhaps M. got something wrong, and their meeting actually took place on the eve of Lavrenty Pavlovich's departure to Berlin. Although the artist was interrogated only two or three months after the dramatic events, it was tricky to forget the dates so quickly. Rather, it can be assumed that M., like other mistresses of Beria, said what the investigators wanted from her, inventing more and more adventures of the villain-lover, and the interrogators did not even think about the plausibility of what they were told. By the way, Rudenko and Moskalenko, who interrogated Beria, did not know anything about Beria's trip to East Germany, and therefore did not doubt the testimony of his mistress. Or maybe they dictated these testimonies, including here the absurdity about the meeting, allegedly planned by Beria on the day of the meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee. And what is most interesting, Moskalenko and Rudenko, as it seems, even during the investigation did not learn about Beria's voyage to East Germany. There is some mystery here. Did Lavrenty Pavlovich really need to hide this fact from the investigators, which, frankly, thoroughly undermined the version of a conspiracy. Or the uniformed investigators who were not members of the Presidium of the Central Committee were strictly warned: in no case should they touch on foreign policy issues, as well as some others, for example, the relationship of the person under investigation with colleagues on the Presidium, since these are especially important state secrets. By the way, most of the witnesses probably presented themselves as victims of violence so that they would not be suspected of sympathizing with the defeated "enemy of the people." Therefore, today it is difficult to say which of the Beria partners gave themselves voluntarily, and which - under duress. Sergo Beria is convinced that the rumors about the amorous adventures of his father are greatly exaggerated, and here, perhaps, we can agree with him: "Father's whole life passed before the eyes of the family. There must have been breakdowns, every person has some

weaknesses, but such adventures are nonsense. If it comes to that, I can tell you about a girl who really was her father's mistress, but never told anyone about it. I was already an adult, but our relationship with my father remained extremely trusting. Somehow he calls to himself, "We need to talk to you," he said, "I want you to know: I have a daughter. A little man who is not indifferent to me. I want you to know about this. and you always remember that you now have a sister. Let's just not talk about this mom ... "Mom died without knowing about that woman. I fulfilled my father's request. And I saw that woman. She was then 20 years old, maybe a little more. A rather modest young woman... Her father was an employee, her mother was a teacher... And now my half-sister herself, of course, has children. At one time she was married to the son of Politburo member Viktor Grishin. When Grishin found out that his son was going to marry Beria's daughter, he decided to consult with Brezhnev.

As far as I know, Leonid Ilyich reacted like this: "Well, what does this have to do with your son? And why are you pretending that you don't know that all this is an exaggerated business ..." I will say quite frankly: my father was not a monk. He was a normal person, who was not bypassed in life by either great love or quite understandable, I think, almost every man's hobbies. Something similar happened to my father in Georgia, when he became interested in a beautiful woman. Here the case ended in a family scandal. Mom was about to leave, but her father, of course, asked for forgiveness, and everything worked out (maybe in 1942 everything was limited to a family scandal, and by no means Nina Teimurazovna's refusal to perform marital duties, as she claimed in 1954; there was nothing to help her husband it is impossible, and the widow of Beria could hope to ease her position with such a recognition. - /B.S./). You can imagine my mother's reaction if everything that is written about my father today was at least a fraction of the truth. Georgian woman! She could argue with Stalin that she should have slammed the door and left such a husband ... "Well, leaving, let's say, was not so easy. It would mean losing many privileges all at once, due to family members of representatives of the highest nomenklatura. In addition, in the 40s, divorces were no longer encouraged at all, and Stalin looked at the dissolution of a marriage by colleagues in the Politburo very askance. Here, an obstinate wife could suddenly turn into an enemy of the people, if Joseph Vissarionovich for some reason was not ready to refuse at the moment from the services of her husband. And Stalin needed Beria. Concluding the story about the love affairs of the "Lubyansk Marshal", I note that, according to the same Stolyarov, Beria took care of his girlfriends, in particular, sought the allocation of living space to them. A trace of one such story has been preserved in a note compiled in connection with the Anti-Beria plenum by the manager of the affairs of the Council of Ministers M.T. Pomaznev addressed to Malenkov and Khrushchev dated July 6, 1953 "On the activities of L.P. Beria". Very terrible accusations appeared there. For example, Lavrenty Pavlovich was accused of summoning Khrushchev to the Presidium of the Council of Ministers in connection with the unsatisfactory situation with the delivery of potatoes and vegetables to Moscow in the winter of 1952/53: "Beria demanded from Comrade. Pervukhina M.G., to comrade. Khrushchev was necessarily at a meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, so that the analysis of this case was entrusted to comrade. Khrushchev N.S. He achieved this, although Comrade. Pervukhin did not want to do this. "And why, one wonders, not discuss the problems of providing the capital with vegetables in the presence of the head of the Moscow Communists? In my opinion, Beria's decision was quite natural, and it is unlikely that he was going to somehow

"lower" Nikita Sergeevich. And the denunciation of Lavrenty Pavlovich that Beria ordered to allocate a room to the technical secretary of the local committee of the Bolshoi Theater of a certain Rakhmatullina sounds quite funny. Pomaznev proudly reported, as if about some kind of feat: "Beria called me at least 6-7 times about the allocation of Rakhmatullina's room. The allocation of Rakhmatullina's room was delayed." The unfortunate typist, who obviously showed herself in the most worthy way on the love front, had to console herself with the fact that she was still not made an accomplice of the "conspirator" Beria.

DANCE ON THE BONES: THE JULY 1953 PLENUM

Beria was still alive, still under arrest in the bunker of the Moscow Military District, but for his comrades in the upper echelon of power, he was already a dead man. Members of the Presidium hurried to formalize his fall by the corresponding decision of the highest party body, urgently convening an extraordinary Plenum of the Central Committee. It ran for six days, from 2 to 7 July 1953. All the speakers branded Beria and blamed Lavrenty Pavlovich for all the sins that the party had accumulated during the years of Stalin's rule. The select party people took revenge on Lavrenty Pavlovich for decades of their own fear. Beria became a kind of scapegoat. They decided to hang all the sins of the party and the Soviet government on him, so that later they could feel calm, in order to gain confidence that they would no longer be prosecuted for their previous crimes, since everything was attributed to the enemy of the people and agent of international imperialism Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria. The members of the Central Committee sacredly followed the laws of apparatus morality: push the falling one, that tomorrow your party comrades will drown you yourself. True, some of those who branded Beria, however, did not survive later anyway.

The main accusations against Beria were made in the main report by Malenkov and introductory speeches by Khrushchev and Molotov. Georgy Maksimilianovich stated: "Shortly after the death of Comrade Stalin, we, members of the Presidium, began to be convinced that Beria was dishonest and, as it turned out more and more, for criminal purposes began to use our desire for unity, for friendly work in leadership team (here you can see a hidden hint that until the very last moment Beria's actions did not raise objections from colleagues in the Presidium of the Central Committee. - / B. S. /).

First of all, Beria began to deftly and skillfully use his position as Minister of the Interior and developed an active activity in that criminal direction in order to put the Ministry of Internal Affairs over the party and the government.

Further, Malenkov quoted the denunciation of Beria by the head of the Lvov Department of Internal Affairs T.A. Strekach, who was dismissed by Lavrenty Pavlovich from the post of Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and therefore sincerely hated the "Lubyanka Marshal": "In April of this year, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Meshki gave me ... instructions to collect and convey to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR, information about the national composition of the leading At the same time, Meshik suggested reporting shortcomings in the work of party bodies in collective farms, enterprises, educational institutions, among the intelligentsia and among young people.

I consider such instructions to be wrong, since the organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs do not have to and do not have the right to check the work of party organs, I called Meshik personally on the VC and checked whether he really gave such an instruction. The metic confirmed that this was his instruction and demanded that the execution be speeded up. Thinking that Meshik had given such an instruction by mistake or out of inexperience, I tried to convince him that it was unacceptable to collect such information about the work of party organs through the organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Meshik lashed out at me with a curse and said with great irritation:

tasks cannot be entrusted, you will immediately go to the regional committee and report them to the secretary, but know that this is the task of comrade. Beria and its implementation cannot be delayed, take the trouble to complete it today. "I did not believe Meshik that this task comes from Comrade Beria, since I believe that Comrade Beria, as a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU, can at any time receive such data from the Central Committee CPSU or in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

Guided by my party duty, I reported to the secretary of the regional party committee T. Serdyuk about such an obviously incorrect instruction that I had received from Comrade Meshik.

On the same evening, Comrade Beria called me in Lvov and said verbatim the following: "What are you doing there, you don't understand anything, why did you go to the regional party committee and tell Serdyuk about the assignment you received? Meshik We will expel you from the organs, arrest you and rot in the camps, we will grind you into powder, turn you into camp dust. this is a sign of the liberalization that came after Stalin's death! / - B.S. /) And then Comrade Beria, in a state of strong irritation, repeated the following several times: "Do you understand this or not, understand, understand? So take it into account. "When I tried to explain myself on this issue, Beria did not listen to me and hung up.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR June 12 with. I was removed from the post of head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and recalled to Moscow. My request to leave me to work in Ukraine was categorically refused.

Tov. Meshik, knowing about Comrade Beria's conversation with me, twice reminded me: "Well, what happened to you from Comrade Beria? You will be smarter in the future." Further, Comrade Meshik, in a mocking form, literally told me the following: "And Comrade Melnikov, the secretary of the Central Committee, is a bad Chekist. Meshik, I'm collecting information about the party organs.

It is characteristic to note that Comrade Milshtein, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR, is also talking the same way. For example, in March of this year, he told me it. Ivashutin, the former Deputy Minister of the Interior of the Ukrainian SSR, said that now everything will be different, the party bodies will not interfere, as they did before, in the work of the Chekist bodies. The chiefs of the Regional Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs should and will be independent of the secretary of the regional party committee.

Lieutenant General Kobulov A.Z. (brother of Deputy Minister t.

Kobulova B.Z.) also told me: "You did not take into account the fact that Comrade Beria came to the leadership of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs and that now the bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs will not be as dependent on party bodies as they were before. You can't imagine what rights Comrade Beria enjoys. He decisively breaks all the old orders, not only in our country, but also in democratic countries."

Commenting on Strokach's statement, Malenkov stressed: "As it has now become known, Beria gave exactly the same assignments for other republics - Lithuanian, Estonian, Belarusian, etc."

Here George Maximilianovich was cunning. Long before the Plenum, he, along with other members of the Presidium, read the memos of Beria

on these republics and adopted the relevant resolutions. And he should have understood well that Lavrenty Pavlovich received information for his notes from the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Something else is more interesting. Strokach was undoubtedly aware that by refusing to carry out Meshik's direct order and informing the secretary of the Lvov Regional Committee about it, he grossly violated official discipline and risked not only losing his post, but also being arrested. Experience suggests that such statements by subordinates against the chief of the punitive organs appeared only when his removal was already a foregone conclusion at the very top. So it was, for example, when, on the eve of the fall of Yezhov, a statement against the people's commissar was written by the head of the Ivanovsky UNKVD, V.P. Zhuravlev, who claimed that he informed Yezhov about the suspicious behavior of a number of senior NKVD officials, but he did not take any action. Four days after the discussion of Zhuravlev's denunciation of the Politburo, Yezhov was forced to submit his resignation.

It is difficult to get rid of the impression that Strokach did not just write his denunciation against Meshik and Beria out of an unconscious impulse to breathe. Timofei Amvrosievich was a creature of Serov and Khrushchev, who played a prominent role in the Anti-Beria plot. It is possible that, having received an order from Meshik to collect material on local party bodies, Strokach first called Khrushchev or Serov and was instructed to contact the secretary of the Lvov regional committee, and the order was not to be carried out. Thus, Khrushchev and Malenkov, having given Beria the opportunity to remove Strokach from Lvov, received weighty compromising evidence, which backdated the arrest of Beria. And Strokach, who survived a short-term disgrace, returned to the post of Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. Z.T. Serdyuk soon received a promotion, becoming the head of the Communists of Moldova.

I note that a similar cart to Beria came from the Minister of Internal Affairs of Belarus M.I. Baskakov, Ignatiev-Malenkov's henchman. But it was not Malenkov who announced it at the plenum, but the head of the Belarusian communists N.S. Patolichev. The denunciations of Strokach and Patolichev were also used during the investigation into the Beria case. Having been instructed to collect materials on party bodies, Baskakov, like Strokach, did not comply with them, but immediately reported to Khrushchev and the head of the Belarusian communists N.S. Patolichev. Of course, he was immediately removed from his post on June 6, 1953. Mikhail Ivanovich had nothing to lose anyway. Earlier, until 1951, he was the Minister of State Security of Uzbekistan, but he made a mistake and was removed from this post. Beria's henchman Goglidze was sent to replace him in an emergency order, correcting Baskakov's mistakes for three months.

So Baskakov understood that the question of his removal from the post of Minister of the Interior of Belarus was only a matter of time. But, again, it is absolutely unbelievable that he would decide on such a demarche as refusing to carry out the order of the Minister of the Interior of the Union, without receiving guarantees from the leaders - Khrushchev and Malenkov, that he would not get anything for it. And indeed, already in July of the 53rd, immediately after the arrest of Beria, he was reinstated at the head of the Belarusian Ministry of Internal Affairs (Lavrenty Pavlovich did not have time to appoint a successor to him - another proof that Beria had a little trouble with the devoted personnel of the security officers). In a letter addressed to Khrushchev, Baskakov testified that Beria's instructions "caused clear doubts in me. The data that they demanded did not have

nothing to do with the work of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Despite the warning not to divulge these instructions, immediately after the conversation I went to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus, to the first secretary, comrade. Patolichev, and reported everything to him about the instructions received and about the nature of the conversation that was with Beria and Kobulov ...

Before I had time to return from Comrade Patolichev's, Kobulov called again and told through his secretary that I should be in Moscow on Saturday, June 6th. In the afternoon, I flew to Moscow, and on the same day, at about 20 o'clock, I was summoned to Minister Beria, where it was announced to me that I had been relieved of the post of Minister of the Interior of the Byelorussian SSR.

Beria sincerely believed that Malenkov, and possibly Khrushchev, supported the idea of shifting the center of power from party to Soviet bodies, and accordingly instructed his subordinates that from now on they should not submit to the regional committees, but close directly to the central apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

At the July plenum, Malenkov also accused Beria of his foreign policy initiatives: "Last week, on the eve of the day we decided to consider Beria's case in the Presidium of the Central Committee, he came to me with a proposal to take steps through the Ministry of Internal Affairs to normalize relations with Yugoslavia. I told him, that this question should be discussed in the Central Committee. What kind of proposal is this? In the materials now seized from Beria, there is the following document:

"I take this opportunity to convey to you, comrade Rankovich (chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and second person in the Yugoslav leadership after Tito. - / B.S. /), big greetings from comrade Beria, who remembers you well.

Comrade Beria instructed me to inform you personally in strict confidentiality that he and his friends (in the handwritten original note, written by Beria's hand, it was: "Malenkov, Beria and their friends", but Malenkov preferred not to give his last name. Otherwise, all participants in the plenum would have become it is clear that Beria drafted the letter to Rankovich with the approval of Malenkov and other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee - /B.S./) stand for the need for a radical revision and improvement of relations between the two countries.

In this regard, Comrade Beria asked you to personally inform Comrade Tito about this, and if you and Comrade Tito share this point of view, then it would be advisable to organize a confidential meeting of specially authorized persons. The meeting could be held in Moscow, but if you consider this unacceptable for some reason, then in Belgrade.

Comrade Beria expressed confidence that this conversation, except for you and Comrade Tito, will not be known to anyone.

Malenkov lied when he convinced the plenum participants that Beria had made a proposal to normalize relations with Yugoslavia on the very eve of his arrest. In fact, Lavrenty Pavlovich, as we remember, spent ten days, until the fateful day of his fall, on a business trip to the GDR, where he suppressed an anti-communist popular uprising. But the very fact of this trip Malenkov and other members of the Presidium concealed from the participants of the plenum. After all, a conspirator and agent of imperialism cannot suppress a putsch inspired, according to the official Soviet version, by "the forces of imperialism."

And the next point of Beria's accusations in Malenkov's report was the statement about Lavrenty Pavlovich's intention to restore the bourgeois system in the GDR: "We all came to the conclusion that as a result of the wrong policy in the GDR we made many mistakes, there is great discontent among the German population, which was especially pronounced in the fact that the population from East Germany began to flee to West Germany. In the last period, about 2 years, about 500 thousand people fled to West Germany.

We explained to our German friends, and they fully agreed with this, that in present international conditions it is impossible to pursue a course towards the accelerated construction of socialism in the GDR...

We are in danger of an internal catastrophe. We had to soberly look the truth in the eye and admit that without the presence of Soviet troops, the existing regime in the GDR is not stable ...

We considered that the most urgent task was for our German friends to quickly and decisively implement measures to improve the political and economic situation in the GDR. The events in the GDR showed the correctness of these measures. We were even late with their implementation, which the enemy ... took advantage of. "And not a word about who exactly proposed these measures, and then suppressed the "enemy uprising."

On the contrary, Malenkov tried as much as possible to separate the position of Beria and other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee on the German question: "We believed and believe, together with our German friends, that it is necessary to correct the course towards the accelerated construction of socialism ...

When discussing the German question, Beria proposed not to correct the course towards the accelerated construction of socialism, but to abandon any course towards socialism in the GDR and head towards bourgeois Germany ... It is clear that this fact characterizes him as a bourgeois degenerate. "Well, maybe, here Georgy Maximilianovich was right: A pragmatic technocrat, Beria had long ago realized the inefficiency of the socialist economy and had nothing against the restoration of the capitalist order not only in East Germany, but also in the USSR.

By the way, the experience of the GDR clearly testified to the collapse of hopes for building socialism and communism. Indeed, according to Marxist theory, such an industrialized country as Germany was an ideal field for socialist

experiment. And suddenly it turns out that the German workers do not want socialism, and they have to abandon the course towards its accelerated construction.

Malenkov also mentioned the amnesty carried out at the suggestion of Beria, however, without directly mentioning that it was he who initiated it. But he attributed to the defeated Lavrenty Pavlovich something that he never did - the initiative to release the thieves of recidivists. What Malenkov was counting on here is hard to say. Is that the fact that the participants of the plenum of newspapers do not read. After all, in reality, the decree on amnesty did not even mention the release of recidivist criminals.

Another accusation brought by Malenkov to Beria looks just as fantastic: "I must tell the Plenum of the Central Committee of Beria such criminal actions as using the protection of members

Presidium of the Central Committee to control them. Now we know that Beria immediately learned about every movement of the members of the Presidium through the guards. It is also known that telephone conversations with members of the Presidium of the Central Committee were overheard and reported to Beria. We have documentary data on this score. "However, neither then nor subsequently any documents indicating that the guards informed Beria about the movement of the members of the Presidium or that he organized wiretapping of their telephone conversations were presented. Yes, and in what way, interestingly, Malenkov, Khrushchev and others could organize a conspiracy against Beria if they were under his hood all the time.

On the contrary, according to some indirect data, it can be judged that Beria ordered to stop the practice of listening and spying on high-ranking party and Soviet officials. At the investigation in his case, the former head of the 1st special department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs A.S. Kuznetsov (under Beria he also headed the commission to review the cases of those expelled from Georgia in the "Mingrelian case") testified: "Beria instructed me to contact all the heads of departments of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs and convey to them his order to deposit in the 1st special department all the operational- undercover materials collected on senior officials of party and Soviet bodies, including the leaders of the party and government. Such materials were handed over to the mothers, including 248 sealed packs with materials of eavesdropping and surveillance techniques of the 1st special department. I handed over the inventories of the materials received on May 25 Kobulov with my report addressed to Beria, in which I wrote that a number of materials were provocative and therefore it was necessary to create an authoritative commission to check ... "However, Kuznetsov did not confirm what the investigators really wanted from him: that Beria ordered to continue to listen to members Presidium of the Central Committee and other dignitaries. On the contrary, the delivery of all previously accumulated materials was carried out due to the fact that from now on the practice of operational intelligence development of members of the highest echelon of power was stopped. And what to do with the already accumulated material, it was probably not Lavrenty Pavlovich alone, but a commission of members of the Presidium of the Central Committee. Beria was also blamed for the distrust that Stalin had in the last years of his life for Molotov and Mikoyan. Malenkov stated: "In the speech of I.V. Stalin at the Plenum of the Central Committee after the XX Party Congress, under the influence of slanderous slander from the enemy elements from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, an incorrect, erroneous

characteristic to comrade V.M. Molotov, whom the party and the country have known for decades as a loyal and devoted fighter for communism, as the most prominent figure in the party and the Soviet state. We also consider incorrect the remarks made at the same Plenum against comrade Mikoyan, accusing him of dishonesty before the party. "Here Georgy Maksimilianovich completely reported. The Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1952 was engaged exclusively in Gulag construction projects and could not provide any compromising evidence on Molotov. Yes, and it was headed by Kruglov, who was close to Malenkov. Probably, the report meant the MGB. But even here, Beria actually had nothing to do with it, since another Malenkov protege, Ignatiev, was at the head of the MGB. In addition, Malenkov preferred to forget that sharp letter

Stalin against Molotov, which in the autumn of 1945 was signed not only by Beria, but also by Malenkov and Mikoyan. That speech of Stalin at the October Plenum of 1952 was not stenographed. We can judge her only by the memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev and Konstantin Simonov. Khrushchev reports that Stalin called Molotov and Mikoyan "agents of certain Western powers", although at the same time, contrary to all logic, he left them in the Presidium of the Central Committee (at the same time, however, they were not included in the narrower Bureau of the Presidium, where real power was concentrated). Simonov, on the other hand, conveys the content of Stalin's speech in this way: "The main feature of Stalin's speech was that he did not consider it necessary to speak at all about courage or fear, determination and capitulation. Everything that he said about this, he tied specifically to two members of the Politburo ... to which I ... least of all expected to hear what Stalin said about them. First, with all this synodic of accusations and suspicions, accusations of instability, infirmity, suspicions of cowardice, capitulation, he fell upon Molotov ... At first I did not believe his ears, thought that he had misheard or misunderstood. It turned out that it was so. It followed from Stalin's speech that the person he most suspected of being capable of capitulation was the most dangerous person for him in this sense that evening, at this plenum Molotov ... He talked about Molotov long and mercilessly, cited some examples of Molotov's wrong actions that I did not remember, connected mainly with those periods when he, Stalin, was on vacation, and Molotov remained behind him and incorrectly decided some questions that needed to be resolved differently ... The accusations that he set out were somehow unfinished, unclear and vague ... I still did not understand what Molotov was guilty of, I only understood that Stalin accuses him of a series of actions in the post-war period, accuses with anger of such intensity, which seemed to be associated with a direct danger to Molotov, with a direct threat to draw those final conclusions, which, bearing in mind the past, could be expected from Stalin ... The main content of his speech, Stalin specifically attached the whole system of accusations of cowardice and capitulation, and calls for Leninist courage and inflexibility to the figure of Molotov: he was accused of all those sins that should not take place in the party if time takes its toll and Stalin ceases to be at the head of the party .. The same structure was used in the next part of his speech, dedicated to Mikoyan, shorter, but in its shades, perhaps, even more angry and disrespectful ... The faces of Molotov and Mikoyan were white and dead (the poor fellows probably thought that they were about to be arrested . - /B. WITH./). These faces remained just as white and dead when Stalin finished, returned, sat down at the table, and they - first Molotov, then Mikoyan - went down one after another to the podium where Stalin had just stood, and there - Molotov longer, Mikoyan shorter - tried to explain to Stalin their actions and

actions, justify themselves, tell him that this is not so, that they have never been cowards or capitulators and will not be afraid of new clashes with the camp of capitalism and will not capitulate to it ... I don't know why Stalin chose in his last speech at the Plenum The Central Committee as the two main objects of distrust, namely Molotov and Mikoyan. The fact that he clearly wanted to compromise them both, to belittle, to deprive the halo of one of the first historical figures after himself, was beyond doubt. He

wanted to belittle them, especially Molotov, to negate the halo that Molotov had, despite the fact that, in fact, in recent years he was largely removed from business, despite the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had already for several years Vyshinsky directly led, despite the fact that his wife was in prison - despite all this, by many, many people - and the wider the circle is taken, the more and more of them - the name of Molotov was called or remembered directly after behind the name of Stalin. Stalin, apparently, did not want all this. This he sought to make clear and feel to all who gathered at the plenum, to all old and new members and candidates of the Central Committee, to all old and new members of the executive bodies of the Central Committee who had yet to be elected. For some reason, he did not want Molotov after him, if something happened to him, to remain the first figure in the state and in the party. And his speech completely ruled out such a possibility.

I admit that, knowing Molotov, he believed that he was not capable of fulfilling the first role in the party and in the state. But he hit Molotov precisely at that point, precisely at that point, which in the minds of people was the strongest "for" when evaluating Molotov. He hit below the belt, hit according to the opinion that prevailed among many, whatever it was, but Molotov was still his closest ally. He beat on the idea that Molotov was the hardest, most inflexible follower of Stalin. Bill, accused of capitulation, of the possibility of cowardice and capitulation, i.e. just in what no one ever suspected Molotov. He beat treacherously and purposefully, he beat, knocking out his possible successors. That is the main thing that has been preserved in my mind in connection with this speech.

In this case, it is not the specific accusations brought by Stalin against Molotov and Malenkov that are important, but the conviction that Stalin, on his own initiative, chose the last two victims of his anger. And he did not connect it with the intrigues of Beria or anyone else. Iosif Vissarionovich was not such a person to succumb to someone's influence in solving such a vital issue, who and when to execute.

Stalin, of course, did not want to see Molotov or Mikoyan as his successors, fearing that they might make too big concessions to the Anglo-Americans, and this, in turn, would lead to a "bourgeois degeneration" of Soviet power and the entry of the USSR into Rakh Atepsapa. However, there is no evidence to suggest that he ever considered Beria a viable candidate to succeed him. Rather, Stalin saw Malenkov in this capacity, but did not speak directly about this either.

Stalin's speech at the October Plenum was also preserved in the recording of one of its participants - the secretary of the Kursk Regional Committee L.N. Efremov. There, Stalin justified the significant expansion of the composition of the Central Committee and the Presidium of the Central Committee as follows: "We old people will die, but we need to think about who, in whose hands we will hand over the baton of our great cause. Who

carry her forward? This requires younger, more dedicated people, politicians. And what does it mean to raise a political, statesman? This requires great effort. It will take ten, no, all fifteen years to bring up a statesman."

Already these words should have seriously frightened the old guard. It turned out that Stalin hoped to stay in power for another fifteen years, and during this time he hoped to thoroughly "sort out the little people", not knowing that he had less than five months to live. And a direct hint that it is the young cadres who are distinguished by their special devotion to the leader, while veterans, on the contrary, are suspected of lack of loyalty and professionalism. Iosif Vissarionovich did not criticize any of the young, but the old people got it: "They ask why we dismissed prominent party and state leaders from important ministerial posts ... We dismissed ministers Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov or others and replaced them with new workers. Why "On what basis? The work of a minister is a muzhik's work. It requires great strength, specific knowledge and health. That is why we have relieved some honored comrades of their posts and appointed new, more qualified, enterprising workers in their place. They are young people, full of strength and energy We must support them in their responsible work...

It is impossible not to touch on the wrong behavior of some prominent political figures if we are talking about unity in our affairs. I have in mind Comrades Molotov and Mikoyan.

Molotov is a man devoted to our cause. Call, and I have no doubt he will not hesitate to give his life for the party. But you can not ignore his unworthy deeds. Comrade Molotov, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, being under "chartreuse" at a diplomatic reception, gave his consent to the British Ambassador to publish bourgeois newspapers and magazines in our country. Why? What was the basis for such consent? Isn't it clear that the bourgeoisie is our class enemy and that spreading the bourgeois press among the Soviet people will bring nothing but harm. Such a wrong step, if allowed, will have a harmful, negative influence on the minds and worldview of the Soviet people, will lead to the weakening of our communist ideology and the strengthening of the bourgeois ideology. This is Comrade Molotov's first political mistake.

And what is Comrade Molotov's proposal to transfer the Crimea to the Jews worth? This is Comrade Molotov's gross mistake. Why did he need it? How can this be allowed? On what basis did Comrade Molotov make such an assumption? We have Jewish autonomy. Isn't that enough? Let this republic develop. And Comrade Molotov should not be a lawyer for illegal Jewish claims to our Soviet Crimea. This is Comrade Molotov's second political mistake. Comrade Molotov behaves incorrectly as a member of the Politburo. And we categorically reject his far-fetched proposals.

Comrade Molotov respects his wife so much that we do not have time to make a decision of the Politburo on this or that important issue, as Comrade Zhemchuzhina quickly becomes aware of this.

It turns out that some invisible thread connects the Politburo with Molotov's wife, Zhemchuzhina, and her friends. And she is surrounded by friends who cannot be trusted. It is clear that such behavior of a member of the Politburo is unacceptable.

Now about Comrade Mikoyan. You see, he objects to the increase in the agricultural tax on the peasants. Who is he, our Anastas Ivanovich? What is not clear to him?

The man is in our debt. We have a strong alliance with the peasants. We have assigned the land to the collective farms forever. They must repay their debt to the state. Therefore, one cannot agree with Comrade Mikoyan's position. (A. I. Mikoyan justifies himself on the podium, referring to some economic calculations.)

Stalin (interrupts Mikoyan): Here is Mikoyan - the newly-minted Frumkin (an economist of the Bukharin school. - /B.S./). You see, he is confused himself and wants to confuse us on this clear, fundamental issue.

(V. M. Molotov on the podium admits his mistakes, justifies himself and assures that he was and remains a faithful student of Stalin.)

Stalin (interrupting Molotov): Nonsense! I don't have any students. We are all students of the great Lenin.

(Stalin proposes to resolve organizational issues, to elect the leading bodies of the party. Instead of the Politburo, a Presidium is formed in a significantly expanded composition, as well as the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU - a total of 36 people.

The list, says Stalin, includes all members of the old Politburo, except for A.A. Andreeva. Regarding the respected Andreev, everything is clear: he is completely deaf, he can't hear anything, he can't work. Let it heal.)

Voice from the floor: Comrade Stalin must be elected General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

Stalin: No! Release me from my duties as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

G.M. Malenkov on the podium: Comrades! We must all unanimously and unanimously ask Comrade Stalin, our leader and teacher, to continue to be the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

Stalin on the podium: Applause is not needed at the Plenum of the Central Committee. It is necessary to resolve issues without emotions, in a businesslike way. And I ask to be relieved of my duties as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. I'm already old. I don't read papers. Choose another secretary.

S.K. Timoshenko (Stalin's brother-in-law: his daughter Ekaterina was married to Vasily Stalin. - /B.S./): Comrade Stalin, the people will not understand this. We all, as one, elect you as our leader - the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU. There can be no other solution.

(All standing warmly applauding, supporting Timoshenko. Stalin stood for a long time and looked into the hall, then waved his hand and sat down)".

Molotov did not buy into Stalin's hypocritical remark that he, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, would give his life for the party without hesitation. In fact, there was enough material in Stalin's speech for the MGB, if the command was given, to set up a case on Molotov, a British spy and Zionist agent. Here it was not just a matter of excluding Molotov from the number of contenders for the Stalinist legacy. Looks like Koba's old friend was going to expel him from the living. No wonder P.S. Zhemchuzhina was taken to Moscow at the end of January 1953 and began to be interrogated about her connections with those arrested in the "doctors' case". At this point, pure intent for a terrorist attack against Stalin came out. At the same time, in February 53, the former ambassador to England was arrested and

Deputy Molotov I.M. Maisky, as well as three employees of the embassy in London. This would make it possible, if necessary, to give the conspiracy led by Vyacheslav Mikhailovich an international character and confirm the version of him as a mater British spy.

Mikoyan, on the other hand, probably came under fire from Stalin's criticism as a new "right deviator" trying to "flirt with the muzhik." In the future, perhaps, Molotov and Mikoyan were planned to be accused of "bourgeois degeneration", of spying for England and of having links with Jewish nationalists and Zionists. Here Anastas Ivanovich was a very suitable figure. In 1918, he was arrested along with 26 Baku commissars, but somehow escaped execution, although he was one of the most famous Bolshevik leaders in the Transcaucasus. There were rumors that Mikoyan was helped to avoid death on the 207th verst of the Trans-Caspian Railway by old connections with the Dashnaks, who put in a good word to the Socialist-Revolutionary government in Atpkhabad. By the way, according to some historians and Mikoyan himself, the execution of 26 Baku commissars was carried out according to the list found on one of them. This list included those leaders of the Baku Soviet who, in the interval between the fall of the Bolshevik government in Baku and the occupation of the city by Turkish troops, ended up in prison. By the way, among those shot there really were more or less random people who were by no means prominent party functionaries. For example, Beria's colleague is Isai Abramovich Mishne, a non-party clerk of the Baku Soviet and the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Caucasian Army. If then it was not he who was accidentally arrested, but Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, he would never have become a formidable "Lubyansk marshal", but would have remained forever lying with a shot through his head in the Transcaspien desert. But the list story doesn't explain everything. Some people were added to those mentioned in the list when they were shot, but they did not touch Mikoyan. And here the version that Anastas Ivanovich was not only a Dashnak, but also a British agent would be quite suitable, because the execution of the Baku commissars was not without the British. It was possible to build a coherent picture. The British recruited Mikoyan, he recruited Molotov, and he deliberately made concessions to England and the United States in the conduct of Soviet foreign policy, and then, again, on the instructions of foreign intelligence services, through his wife he contacted Jewish nationalist circles and organized a "conspiracy of doctors" with the aim of assassination of Stalin. True, by the time of the natural death of Joseph Vissarionovich from a stroke, none of the arrested had yet begun to beat out evidence against Molotov - there was no team. (Zhemchuzhina was last interrogated on March 2, 1953).

Perhaps Stalin was going to play another performance - until the last moment to demonstrate to his comrades-in-arms that, in spite of everything, he believes Molotov, and only under the weight of irrefutable evidence is he forced to ask his comrades in the Central Committee to authorize his arrest. I admit that he wanted to repeat the scenario tested in his time in the case of the "right-wing Trotskyist bloc." First, there would have been a "trial of doctors", perhaps with the participation of Zhemchuzhina. The name of Molotov would have been mentioned on it for the first time. Then, against Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, they would begin to beat out testimony from the same Maisky, embassy

workers, not yet shot Jewish cultural figures, from the same Zhemchuzhina, if she had been left alive. And then already, in the year 1954, a high-profile trial would have taken place with the participation of the "new rights", conspirators and British spies, patrons of the "rootless cosmopolitans" Molotov and Mikoyan. Voroshilov (after all, his wife is a Jewess) and even Andreev, who went into circulation, fortunately, was also married to a Jewess, could well be fastened to them. Members of the Politburo, who, for health reasons, have lost the opportunity to work at full strength and therefore are no longer needed by Stalin, as the example of Ya.E. Rudzutak and V.Ya. Chubar, Iosif Vissarionovich preferred not to leave alive. Although, who knows, maybe in his old age the dictator became a little sentimental and was ready to give the opportunity to his comrades-in-arms who became disabled to die in their bed. L.Z., who never recovered from the consequences of a stroke. Mekhlis, Stalin even left at the XMH party congress as part of the Central Committee, although he understood that Lev Zakharovich would never return to active political activity. Perhaps Andrei Andreevich Andreev would have been quietly left to live out his life. Under Khrushchev, he received a purely decorative position as a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR until he was finally retired in 1962. Maybe Stalin was ready not to touch the former head of the CPC.

In his last speech, the leader never personally mentioned any of the young guards of his comrades-in-arms - neither Malenkov, nor Beria, nor Khrushchev. But he nevertheless decided to check them for lice, asking to resign from leadership positions. I. Stalin behaved in the same way as Ivan the Terrible with the boyars in the famous scene from Eisenstein's film. There can be no doubt that if one of those present proposed to elect Malenkov as General Secretary of the Party, Georgy Maximilianovich would very soon be among the conspirators. Konstantin Simonov recalled: "I saw a terrible expression on Malenkov's face - not exactly fright, no, not fright - but an expression that a person can have is clearer than all others, in any case, many others who have realized the mortal danger that looms above everyone's heads and which others have not yet realized: you cannot agree to this request of Comrade Stalin ... Malenkov's face, his gestures, his expressively raised hands were a direct plea to all those present to immediately refuse Stalin's request.

Malenkov, who well remembered Stalin's vacation in Sochi in 1945, was the first, followed by all the others, to find his bearings very quickly. Since Stalin at the very beginning hinted that he still needed more than one year to bring up a worthy change of leaders, it means that there could be only one answer to the unexpected proposal: to ask dear and beloved Joseph Vissarionovich to stay, not to leave his comrades in the Central Committee. Nor is it surprising that Stalin did not name his possible successor. He could well consider the option that he would not be Malenkov, not Khrushchev, not Beria, but a completely different

a person who is not yet a member of the top party leadership. Who knows if Joseph Vissarionovich was going to make his son Vasily crown prince, forcing him to take up his mind.

Interestingly, the charges brought against Beria in the summer of 1953 practically coincided with those that Stalin was going to bring against Molotov and Mikoyan. Only now they are all concentrated on one thing.

man, the Dashnaks were replaced by Musavatists, but the "Jewish question" was removed. The victors, against whom it could have been directed just recently, were clearly not in the mood to touch on the topic of the struggle against "rootless cosmopolitans". In July 53, Malenkov, Molotov, Khrushchev, Mikoyan and their comrades at the plenum took revenge for the mortal fear experienced in October 52. With might and main they lowered Beria in the eyes of the party nomenklatura, beat him on the head and below the waist, rinsed the dirty linen of the "Lubyansk Marshal", represented him as an adventurer, conspirator, geek, monster. What Lavrenty Pavlovich was most proud of, the atomic and hydrogen project, they tried to take away from him, to present his activity in this area as naked careerism, if not wrecking at all. But, unlike Molotov and Mikoyan then, in October 52, now Beria was already sitting in a bunker under arrest, he could not answer the accusations, he could not explain anything to anyone, and no one was going to listen to his explanations.

Speaking on July 2, 1953, Malenkov continued: "Further, comrades, it is known that Beria was in charge of a special committee engaged in atomic affairs (most of those present, I think, learned about this for the first time. - / B.S. /) ... And here he is detached himself and began to act, ignoring the Central Committee and the government in the most important questions of the work of the special committee. Thus, without the knowledge of the Central Committee and the government, he decided to organize an explosion of a hydrogen bomb. Vannikov, Zavenyagin) gave a draft decision to be submitted to the government, he, Beria, crossed out this document and single-handedly made a decision, hiding it from the Central Committee and the government.

Here the distortion of facts is adjacent to outright lies. Of course, the question of when to test the hydrogen bomb was not decided by Beria alone, but together with three colleagues in the leading four of the Presidium of the Central Committee, which was formalized by a number of government decrees. As for the Special Committee, it really was not subordinate to either the Central Committee or the government, but only because it was directly subordinate to Stalin. Beria reported to him on the progress of work on the creation of atomic and hydrogen bombs.

At the end of the report, Malenkov made a number of important slips: "It has been ... about 4 months since the death of Comrade Stalin. It was necessary to unravel and see Beria in all his glory. Everyone should have seen him as a violator, underminer of the unity of our Central Committee. unite in order to unanimously, I emphasize - quite unanimously, resolve the issue of Beria. When we all in the Presidium of the Central Committee were convinced who we were dealing with, we convened a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee in the presence of Beria charged him. He behaved dishonestly. I could not deny the facts, but began cowardly, vilely to hide the ends, declaring that he would improve ... The Presidium came to the conclusion that it was impossible to stop halfway with such an adventurer, and decided to arrest Beria as an enemy of the party and the people. (Voices: Right!) (Stormy applause.) By exposing and expelling such a reborn as

Beria turned out to be, the Nat Central Committee would be even more cohesive and monolithic (Georgy Maximilianovich had no idea that in just four years he would be overthrown from the party Olympus. - / B. S. /). Taking these drastic measures, the Presidium of the Central Committee was guided by the conviction that in this case, these measures are the only correct ones,

The Presidium of the Central Committee was guided by the conviction that this is what Lenin would have done, this is what Stalin would have done. (Stormy applause.) We are confident that our actions will be unanimously approved by the Plenum of the Central Committee. (Stormy applause.) As for the individual mistakes and inaccuracies made during the period when we exposed Beria for 3-4 months after the death of Comrade Stalin, we will unanimously correct these mistakes and inaccuracies. I would say - it's good that it took only 3 months (Exclamations: That's right!) To see the true face of the adventurer and, regardless of his position and significant opportunities, completely unanimously cut off this reptile, this diseased growth on a healthy body (Applause.) " In fact, Malenkov admits that Beria was "lured": they gave him less than four months after the death of the Great Pilot to reveal his reformist essence, and then they accused him of trying to put the Ministry of Internal Affairs over the party and seize power. it was at the insistence of Khrushchev and Malenkov that his father accepted the post of Minister of the Interior. This was probably one of the tricky moves in a complex combination to discredit Beria in the eyes of the party apparatus. After all, to say that the head of the Special Committee, Beria, tried to seize power - no one would believe. That he, in fact, will he throw academicians of nuclear scientists at the Kremlin or will he bring down a nuclear bomb on Moscow?" Another thing is that Minister of the Interior Beria hatched plans to seize power. From the time of Yagoda, and especially Yezhov, the department served as a scarecrow, both for the broad masses, and especially for party functionaries, in contrast to ordinary citizens who knew well who and how they were made enemies of the people. Yes, and the head of the punitive bodies, in principle, had the opportunity to seize power by force. The troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and to some extent the Kremlin guards, were subordinate to him. And the fact that Lavrenty Pavlovich had just been appointed minister, where people had previously dominated, to one degree or another hostile to him, not every member of the Central Committee could figure out. After Malenkov, according to the place in the party hierarchy, Khrushchev spoke, and after him Molotov, No. 3 in the party leadership, after the fall of Beria from the four turned into a three. Nikita Sergeevich emphasized how cleverly he, along with his comrades on the Presidium of the Central Committee, tricked Beria: "Beria was a great intriguer during the life of Comrade Stalin. his opinion to Comrade Stalin. He deftly, skillfully, sometimes with a hint of some deaf, other time in a more definite way, will sow doubt either in this or that question, or in one way or another show this or that comrade in some bad light and unnerve without any foundation of Comrade Stalin, seeking for a certain time the restoration of Comrade Stalin against this or that comrade ... Dexterity, impudence and arrogance are the main qualities of Beria ... During the life of Comrade Stalin, when we were on duty with him, two members of the Bureau The Central Committee relentlessly... I then said to Comrade Bulganin: "Nikolai Alexandrovich, Stalin is hopelessly ill, he will die, what will happen after Stalin?"... I say, here is my alarm: after Stalin's death, Beria will rush to the post of Minister of Internal affairs. Why does he need this post? He needs this post in order to capture such positions in the state, so that through his intelligence

set up spying on members of the Politburo, eavesdrop, follow, create cases, intrigue, and this will lead to very bad consequences, and maybe more, for the party. Bulganin. There was such a conversation. Khrushchev. It is impossible, I say, to allow this to happen, death will be for everyone. But you will say, well, then Comrade Stalin died, but still, they say, Beria became a minister and, they say, you also thought and spoke with Bulganin, but the ites and Bulganin did not come out when there was a formation and distribution of duties ... I'll tell you why. It is one thing when you think: you are dying, but still alive, and another thing is the psychological state when Stalin has already died ... I thought that during the discussion it was not entirely correct to come forward and express this opinion. You, dear comrades, keep in mind that Beria achieved his goal even during Stalin's lifetime, because of the disunity between the members of the Bureau of the Central Committee, he achieved ... The corpse of Comrade Stalin, which has not yet cooled down - and to raise this issue, they will say: he took advantage of the death of Comrade Stalin, immediately introduces a split and confusion in the leadership of the party, and, thus, cleverly using it, they will put you up against you, and you will be a fool, and what a fool! Could it be ... Beria really wanted this. Beria became Minister of the Interior. You, comrades, everyone knows the relative importance of this "person" in the Party. Quite big. "As for the conversation with Bulganin, Khrushchev was hardly cunning. But if he really was preceded by a conversation between Khrushchev and Beria with a request to accept the post of head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, then the conversation with Nikolai Alexandrovich becomes just a cover action. Khrushchev had to create among the bulk of the members of the Presidium the impression that that from the very beginning he warned about Beria's intrigues. Bulganin, of course, did not know that Khrushchev, apparently, by agreement with Malenkov, and, perhaps, with Molotov, had already offered Beria to head the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Nikita Sergeevich did not say a word against the appointment of Beria, although logically, it would seem that it was required to actively object to such a dangerous development, as he assured Bulganin, Bulganin was not aware of the intrigue and remained convinced that Nikita Sergeevich objected to Beria's appointment. Khrushchev proposed to analyze "10 years of our activity. Beria will say that he was not a minister at that time. Let's take a later period. Let's take a look at what conspiracies within our country were opened by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of State Security? With the exception of fake, exaggerated ones, nothing." From this fact, Khrushchev made an unexpected conclusion: Beria needed the Ministry of Internal Affairs to "take this uncontrolled body into his hands ... Look, any minister, any employee, we control the implementation of the plan, there the party organization will act, we see something there, but in the Ministry of Internal Affairs everything is shrouded in mystery. He says: I'm going to a safe house to see some agent, and what kind of agent to take there, does anyone know? No one knows. That's what he needed, comrades. That's why he went to this post, against the party, against the government. That's the purpose of it. Such an interesting detail, I noticed. I consider the shameful case with the doctors, the Georgian case is a shame. We, members of the Presidium, talked to each other several times, I spoke to Lavrenty. I received a letter to the Central Committee ... from Colonel General Kryukov, and Zhukov received this letter. I showed the Presidium of the Central Committee, it needs to be considered. There are two dozen

half of the generals were convicted, and Kryukov was sentenced to 25 years. Beria does not take up this matter of analysis, and that this is a linden is indisputable ... Why? I think that Beria did it for those purposes - he wanted

work with these generals and then release them. Because he did not just free, but he freed, and these people came out, and he inspired them that it was Beria who gave them back their lives, not the party, not the government, but Beria. Kuzmichev was arrested. I think that it was necessary to release him, but was it necessary to release this Kuzmichev from prison, immediately put on a general's suit and appoint the head of the security of the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee (Nikita Sergeevich's logic is downright wonderful: you can release an innocent person, but restore him to he is not worth the general rank and in his former position, since he will feel indebted to Beria, and not to the Presidium of the Central Committee. - / B. S. /). I think that it was hardly necessary, but he was appointed. Why? Because Kuzmichev became the shadow of Beria, he needed such a person. That is why the post of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was needed, that is why he took this body into his own hands. For criminal purposes. "I must say right away that Nikita Sergeevich's argument could only convince schoolchildren who had read detective stories and novels by Dumas about intelligence officers and insidious conspirators staging palace coups. People who were somewhat aware of the work of state security agencies knew well that the ministers themselves do not go to secret apartments. As for the closeness of the MVD-MGB system, in terms of undercover activities, whether abroad or within the country, it was, is and will be. In a totalitarian or simply authoritarian society, such a veil of secrecy inevitably spreads and on all aspects of the activities of the law enforcement system. And here it makes absolutely no difference who is at the head of the bodies - Yezhov or Beria, Kruglov or Serov. As for the just released General S.F. Kuzmichev, who was arrested in the "doctors' case", then his arrested again, this time in the case of Beria, kept in prison for a year, and then released again, without bringing any charges. The appointment of Kuzmichev as head of the security department looked quite logical. He already held this post in the 49-50s, but was dismissed in connection with the development of the "doctors' cause". The formal reason for the arrest of Kuzmichev was the case of abuses by the former head of the Main Directorate of Security N.S. Vlasik. Now, after all the accusations in the "doctors' case" were found to be falsified, and in the case of the Main Security Department it turned out that Kuzmichev did not appropriate any of the state property, there seemed to be no reason not to trust him. Khrushchev continued to draw the image of an insidious conspirator: "Here is this collection of all kinds of information. You know, for example, that Beria raised this question. I even blame the Plenum myself. He calls me once and says: "You know, an employee of the Administrative Department called Kobulov and asks him how things are going. This is impossible. I am a member of the Presidium, and it seems that some kind of shadow is being cast, someone is calling my first deputy, and not me. "In a word, by this he raises the question that they should not call in the Central Committee, which means freeing the organs from any party control Ministry of Internal Affairs for arbitrariness ... That's what Beria wanted, and I would say, comrades, he achieved it. It's a fact. After all, these notes on Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus. It's a fact that they

collected not through the regional committees, not through the central committees, they are collected through the employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, although these materials are all available in the Central Committee. It means that he achieved his goal. " Of course, like any minister, Lavrenty Pavlovich was not enthusiastic about the interference of party bodies in the sphere of his competence and resisted this in every possible way. But here he was not original. The same could be said about Molotov, and about Mikoyan, and about Kaganovich, and about other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee who led this or that

ministry or branch of the national economy. All of them preferred to give directives to the party organizations at subordinate enterprises and institutions, and not to listen to instructions from some department of the administrative bodies of the Central Committee. It is also understandable that Beria's desire to obtain information about the true situation in Ukraine, the Baltic states and Belarus through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and not be content with the reports available to the Central Committee. Lavrenty Pavlovich had every reason to believe that the reports of the local party organs embellished reality. Khrushchev, at the same time, quite accurately defined the essence of Beria's political position: "... Rakosi said: I would like to know what is being decided in the Council of Ministers and what is in the Central Committee, what kind of distinction should there be. Beria then dismissively said: that the Central Committee, let the Council of Ministers decide, let the Central Committee deal with personnel and propaganda. Lavrenty Pavlovich wanted to leave God's things to God, and Caesar's things to Caesar. Let the Central Committee deal with ideology, propaganda and personnel, and the Council of Ministers with the implementation of a specific policy, the solution of all practical issues. At the same time, the relationship between the party and the government would become akin to the relationship between the owners of a large company and its managers. The owner determines the personnel policy and (not always) the overall strategy, but does not interfere in the actions of managers. If things go badly, the management team is simply changed, or, conversely, the overall business strategy is changed. Beria also proposed something similar, and he did it clearly with the consent and support of Malenkov. Georgy Maximilianovich, considering himself as Stalin's successor, hoped to concentrate all real power in his hands as chairman of the Council of Ministers, leaving the Marxist-Leninist theory to Khrushchev and other secretaries of the Central Committee. Beria, on the other hand, expected to reign supreme in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, making it the main instrument of reforms. But, as we know, everything turned the other way around, and very soon, a few months after the July Plenum, it became clear that the real power was not with Malenkov, but with Khrushchev. The party apparatus, hardened in purges, overcame the Soviet apparatus, only just during the war, which felt the taste of real

authorities.

Khrushchev regarded Beria's proposal as undermining the leading role of the party, an attempt to reduce it "to the position of propaganda." And then he blurted out in the most remarkable way: "In his own (Beria. - /b. S./) understanding - what is the difference between Hitler and Goebbels?" Like other communist bosses, Nikita Sergeevich was well aware of the kinship of the Bolshevik regime with the Nazi one. But at the same time, he counted on the role of Hitler-Stalin, and not Goebbels-Zhdanov.

And Nikita Sergeevich also admitted that he had a feigned friendship with Beria, but, again, only in order to better expose his intrigues:

"After all, Beria and I walked together, and walked hand in hand, so we could hear a lot from Beria ... I personally had different periods of our relationship with Beria, but the best period of my relationship with him, such - do not spill, do not stretch out - this is after the death of Comrade Stalin. If I don't call him for a day, then he already calls and asks why not call. You say that there was no time, there were things. "And you call."

I, comrades, began to think: what is it, why such love at once

ignited me, what's the matter? It seems that nothing has changed, I remained the same as I was. And he calls me one day and says, what about Malenkov, what about Molotov. He will throw poison against everyone, he wants, so to speak, to somehow indicate that you are better. Later I told Comrade Malenkov, Comrade Molotov...

The unanimous decision of the Presidium about Beria - this, comrades, had to be achieved. I'll tell you straight up so you don't whisper later. Some said - how is it possible, Malenkov always walks hand in hand with Beria, probably the two of them - they tell me that, and others, probably, they say that Khrushchev also walks with him (Laughter.) And that's right. They walked and I walked. He used to walk in the middle, and Malenkov walked from the right side, and I from the left. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich once even said - the devil knows, you go around and discuss something all the time. I say - nothing worthwhile, all sorts of infamy, it's disgusting even to listen, but we go.

I believe that for the time being this walking has brought us good, the necessary walking. On Thursday, he and I - Malenkov, me and Beria - were driving in the same car, and we said goodbye to him, you know how. He's an intriguer, he intrigues me against Malenkov and against others, but he considered Malenkov's main thing to be against him. He says goodbye, he is waiting for my hand, as soon as I hear it, I also answer him with a "hot" shake; Well, I think, scoundrel, the last squeezing, tomorrow at 2 o'clock we will wait for you. (Laughter.) We won't shake your hand, but we'll shake your tail.

Comrades, a treacherous person should have been treated this way. If we had said, when we had already seen that he was a scoundrel, then I am convinced that he would have dealt with us. Don't think he can. I have already told some comrades, and they told me that I am exaggerating: look, don't be an eccentric, he will bury you, he will make a speech and hang a sign - a leader of the party and government is resting here, and then he will say - "fool." And rest there. He is capable of it. He is capable of pouring poison, he is capable of all vile things. We were not dealing with a Party member who had to be fought by Party methods, but we were dealing with a conspirator, a provocateur, and therefore there was no need to expose ourselves. Agency, they say. This means: agents - the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Central Committee. That's where we're at."

The simple-hearted Khrushchev explained to his colleagues: if you consider a person a scoundrel and a scoundrel, then you can use any means against him, including "non-party methods" - just put him in a jail, and then shoot him after a judicial parody. The best thing to do is pretend to be a friend. And also - to tell colleagues in the Central Committee "horror stories" about Beria the poisoner. The poison laboratory under the NKVD did exist, but it arose under Yezhov, and then

successfully preserved under Beria and Abakumov, but as if, albeit with other people, it was preserved under Abakumov's successors. However, all currently known cases of poisoning of Professor Mairanovsky with poisons were committed with the sanction of the Politburo or Stalin personally. Beria, it seems, until the very end was unaware of the Judas role of his "dear friends" Georgy Maximilianovich and Nikita Sergeevich.

Once again, Khrushchev repeated the lie that he had warmly embraced Beria the day before his arrest. Most likely, in reality, there were touching hugs at parting with Lavrenty Pavlovich on the eve of his ten-day trip to the GDR, right at the airfield. But this trip had to be concealed from the participants of the Plenum. The whole construction of

Beria's conspiracy collapsed, since the "agent of imperialism" and the conspirator successfully suppressed the uprising organized by the "imperialists and revanchists"!

After Khrushchev, Molotov spoke. He emphasized Beria's sins in the field of foreign policy: "Here (at a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee, which discussed the German question. - / B. S. /) Beria's speech was heard - that we would have this socialism in Germany, what kind of socialism would be bourgeois Germany We goggled our eyes - how peace-loving bourgeois Germany can be, what bourgeois Germany can be in the eyes of a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of our party ... " Vyacheslav Mikhailovich also condemned Beria's note addressed to Rankovich, but at the same time admitted that the Presidium of the Central Committee however, it seeks to normalize relations with Yugoslavia, and therefore Moscow and Belgrade exchanged ambassadors: "... If it was not possible in the forehead, we decided to take it to others, we decided that it was necessary to establish the same relations with Yugoslavia as with other bourgeois states: ambassadors, exchange of telegrams, business meetings, etc." Polite diplomatic statements from Beria's letter to Rankovich were regarded almost as complicity with the "Yugoslav fascists."

But the most remarkable was the statement of Vyacheslav Mikhailovich that all the troubles that occurred after 1938 in the Soviet leadership were to blame ... Beria: "I have been working for several years. Since Beria arrived in Moscow, the atmosphere has deteriorated: the plenums have ceased to collect the congress dragged on for 13 years. It began after the 18th congress, just in time for the arrival of Beria in Moscow. He did not make a coup, but he did everything that could be done. He poisoned the atmosphere, he intrigued. Comrade Stalin did not always believe him, especially lately, he had little faith in him (it is interesting how Molotov could judge this, whom Stalin certainly did not believe lately. - / B. S. /), but there was weakness on the part of all of us, without exception. It was as if Stalin, without Beria, could not come to the conclusion that during the period of acute pre-war and military crisis there was no point in wasting time and effort on convening operetta plenums and congresses that would obediently stamp what the Great Pilot dictated to them.

And Vyacheslav Mikhailovich indirectly accused Beria of intending to create a second party in the country, in addition to the communist one. If he did not invent it, then Lavrenty Pavlovich should rightfully be considered the father of the Soviet multi-party system, anticipating Gorbachev by more than three decades. Molotov declared: "The capitalists will give any money, not millions, but billions, in order to start a small camp, an organization that has a leftist physiognomy, a rightist

physiognomy, centrism, pink, whatever you want, only not communist, only in some way it would differ from the CPSU (b), from the CPSU. For this they will do anything. In our country, any other party cannot be anything but an agent of foreign capital, an agent of the imperialists.

And so, comrades, when they want to create a new organization for us... these people either dream about the path that Tito and his gang have taken, or they can dream of creating something like this, because Tito is still considered a communist . Why can't Beria be considered a communist and do something different from what the party is doing? Any such agent will be covered in gold by the bourgeoisie, capitalism, if only he

found...

Our struggle is now reaching a particular acuteness... capitalism is anxious for its own fate... looking for where to find such a rotten place, such a person who can be a provocateur, a traitor, whoever you like, a venal skin, but only fulfill this order, to have such a crack in the Soviet Union. This is the work that the provocateur Beria did - to create a crack and on this basis to undermine our Soviet Union.

Thus, Beria was accused of bourgeois degeneration, of being objectively an agent of the capitalist powers. And during the investigation and trial, he was directly called a spy. At first they wanted to make a "Soviet Tito" out of him first. But then they didn't. Nevertheless, relations with Yugoslavia were gradually improving, and it became inconvenient to use the name of the Yugoslav leader as a swear word.

Having unleashed angry philippics on the defeated enemy, Molotov was forced to recognize some merits for him: "We often come across that a person has merits, works, performs large tasks. Beria belongs to such persons. He did a great job, he worked talentedly in organization of a number of economic measures, but listen, we also use pests, we make them work when necessary, we make people from former pests who are useful when they see that it is impossible to go the same way.

Lavrenty Pavlovich did not have a chance to read the materials of the plenum. If I had read it, I would have rejoiced a lot before death that even such a fierce enemy of his as Molotov, who seemed to not even play ostentatious friendship with him, nevertheless recognized him, Beria, as an organizational talent and merits in carrying out "economic events" (meaning primarily the creation of atomic and hydrogen bombs). Such recognition was worth a lot, because it was not at all opportunistic.

But that was the only kind word Molotov said about Beria. In conclusion, he brought down new thunders on the defeated enemy: "A person who ... wants to be among the leading statesmen must necessarily be a communist. He must earn confidence in some way, rise up. There is no other way out. she puts forward, she appoints people, she popularizes, she gives work (this is perhaps the most concise and capacious definition of the totalitarian system given by one of its most convinced adherents. - / B.S. /) This is the path that Beria understood, and he stubbornly walked along this path, and now, when we look at him, how he concealed everything in himself and moved forward stubbornly and finally got to the top, we saw that

this is for a person. This man does not breathe our spirit, he is a stranger to our Party, he is from a different root, he is a stranger. He is a foreign and anti-Soviet person. From the facts at our disposal we must conclude that our Party work is in many respects weak, not at the level at which it should be carried out. And here it's not only about Beria, not only about the fact that Beria turned out to be Sharia's ideologue. I will read the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, adopted in 1948 and approved by the Central Committee of the party ...:

"The Bureau of the Central Committee of Georgia considers it established that in 1943, in connection with the death of his son, Sharia wrote an ideologically harmful work in verse, imbued with deep pessimism and religious

mystical sentiments. Deviating from the basic principles of the Bolshevik materialistic worldview, Sharia in this work says that he does not see a better world ... His life after the death of his son (he died of tuberculosis) is nothing but torment. And in the end, he agrees to the recognition of the immortality of the soul and the reality of the afterlife.

This man, due to a misunderstanding, was reinstated by us in the party; due to a misunderstanding, we supported the wrong decision of the Central Committee of Georgia. It turns out that until the arrest of Beria, Sharia was his assistant on ideological issues. That's what he breathed."

Right, right was Vyacheslav Mikhailovich. Beria, in essence, was a stranger among the top party leadership. Too pragmatic, too smart, emphatically indifferent to ideological dogmas. And, no matter how blasphemous it may seem in relation to the former head of the punitive department, too kind. Yes, Lavrenty Pavlovich ruined tens of thousands of human lives, but without need, without an order, he did not ruin people. On the contrary, he helped his team in the NKVD in every possible way, which fell into disgrace under Abakumov.

Molotov, on the other hand, calmly read out the essentially wild decision, fully agreeing with him. The father was brought to party responsibility for mourning the untimely death of his son! In Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, the unfortunate father does not cause a drop of sympathy. Not a tear was shed by Stalin's People's Commissar, nicknamed by his comrades for his eyes "iron-assed", for his extraordinary perseverance. Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, as we remember, could cry only when a real threat to get a bullet in the Lubyanka basement arose for him. Very soon, Sharia and his comrades Molotov will be sent to prison for 10 years in prison just for writing speeches for Beria.

He branded Beria and Mikoyan, justifying himself for the softness shown at the beginning of the memorable meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee: "Even before his arrival in Moscow, and especially when he was in Moscow, he managed to deftly, by hook or by crook, get into the confidence of Comrade Stalin. More during the life of Comrade Stalin, especially in recent years, when he could no longer do business, when he began to meet people less, receive information, at that time he deftly got a job as the main informant of Comrade Stalin (the statement is absolutely unfounded, especially in the mouth of Mikoyan, in recent years and especially in the last months of the leader, who was firmly excommunicated from the body. Until now, no documents have been found that Stalin received from Beria any information other than that which was connected with

activities of the Special Committee; although it cannot be ruled out that after the fall of Abakumov, Iosif Vissarionovich listened to some Beria's advice when making appointments in the MGB-MVD system. - /B. WITH./).

It must be said that Comrade Stalin did not trust Beria lately. Beria was forced to admit that Stalin did not trust him, that the Mingrelian case was created in order to arrest Beria on this basis (Stalin was probably not going to go that far, otherwise he would not have sent Beria himself to deal with the Mingrelians and imprison Rukhadze; probably Iosif Vissarionovich simply did not want Beria, as well as other members of the highest political

leadership, did not have too many of their people in the leadership of the regions; for the same reasons, S.M., close to Beria, was most likely removed from the post of chief of the General Staff and removed from Moscow. Shtemenko. - /B. S. /), that Stalin did not have time to bring what he wanted. During the war, Comrade Stalin divided the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security. Also, it seems to me, out of some distrust of him. There was no point in dividing the ministry (nevertheless, after the arrest of Beria, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was again divided in two. - /B.S./). Then he was appointed to the Council of Ministers. This was also an external sign of distrust (distrust is good if Beria was entrusted with a top-secret atomic project and all the intelligence associated with it! - B.S. /). But despite this, Comrade Stalin showed him great confidence."

Poor Anastas Ivanovich is completely confused! The image of the mythological villain, as depicted at the plenum of Beria, demanded that he treacherously rub himself into the trust in the good genius - Stalin. However, at the same time, it was required that the perspicacious Iosif Vissarionovich guessed about the vile essence of Lavrenty Pavlovich. So it turned out that Stalin both trusted and did not trust Beria, which, generally speaking, is nonsense. Rather, it can be assumed that Iosif Vissarionovich did not really want to see the "Lubyansk Marshal" as his successor and was going to shoot him after the hydrogen bomb was created. But with the same success it can be assumed that Stalin thought to keep Beria and use his technocratic talent until his death. There is nothing incredible in the fact that, disappointed in all possible successors, including his own son, Iosif Vissarionovich wanted the heirs to sort out relationships between themselves after his death, like spiders in a jar. And may the best man win!

Mikoyan continued: "Beria's information was usually of an intriguing nature and served special purposes. He managed to carry out a lot of difficult decisions, and it was known that if Beria was against this or that decision, it would fail. By this he created authority for himself. He pretended to be a friend then one and then another worker. We all saw this, but did not attach the same importance that he acquired after Comrade Stalin was gone. "

Here, the obvious demonization of the "Lubyansk Marshal" is striking. Of course, Stalin and other members of the Council of Ministers unquestioningly approved Beria's proposals for the atomic project, which had absolute priority. However, as we have seen, V.S. Rjasny was rejected by Stalin.

Surely, in other areas, the proposals of Lavrenty Pavlovich were not always approved by his colleagues and Stalin.

Mikoyan, characterizing Beria as a seasoned intriguer, unfailingly referred to Sergo Ordzhonikidze, fortunately, the deceased member of the Politburo could not object or confirm anything: "I first learned about his intrigues from Sergo. He walked very excited. He asked me: "I don't understand why Comrade Stalin does not trust me. I am absolutely loyal to Comrade Stalin and do not want to fight him, I want to support him, but he does not trust me. Beria's intrigues play a big role here. Beria from Tbilisi gives Comrade Stalin incorrect information, but Stalin believes him.

It is completely incomprehensible what compromising evidence on Dzerzhinsky could be found by Lavrenty Pavlovich. Most likely, the arrest of Sergo Papulia's elder brother, carried out in Georgia, was meant. But the local party secretary and the NKVD could not take a swing at such a close relative of a member of the Politburo without a written, and most likely oral order from Stalin. And certainly, the conflict not with Beria, but with Stalin brought Sergo Ordzhonikidze to suicide. However, in July 1953, Joseph Vissarionovich was still a sacred cow for the participants of the Plenum, not subject to criticism, therefore it was more profitable to attribute the death of Sergo to the machinations of Lavrenty Pavlovich. And this despite the fact that neither Mikoyan nor the other speakers dared to tell those present about the suicide of Ordzhonikidze.

Anastas Ivanovich also accused the defeated comrade of double-dealing. Hanging this label on Beria, Mikoyan tried to justify himself for his too soft attitude to Beria's lord at a meeting on June 26: "In addition to intrigue and treacherous inciting one against the other, Beria's main weapon was double-dealing. Some may tell us: why didn't you find this scoundrel in time? I explain this matter to myself as follows: the trust he enjoyed with Comrade Stalin, his high position with the leadership caused great difficulties in recognizing everything in a short time without Stalin, bearing in mind the disunity between the members of the Presidium, which exposed the possibility of an exchange of views, as this is accepted among the Bolsheviks in order to give a full assessment of this or that fact.

It turns out a highly amusing picture. On the one hand, Stalin trusts Beria, which makes him invulnerable, but, on the other hand, only Iosif Vissarionovich is able to quickly expose the double-dealer. And none of the members of the Central Committee, of course, dared to draw the attention of the excited Anastas Ivanovich to the fact that he was talking nonsense. And Mikoyan had something to worry about. It seems that he seriously feared that for his softness and long-standing ties with Beria in the Transcaucasus, he could be made an accomplice of Lavrenty Pavlovich in a non-existent conspiracy.

Anastas Ivanovich continued to make excuses: "Sometimes you analyze some facts and think: maybe I'm wrong, because the opinion of other comrades is unknown (it was easier for the "Kremlin fox" Mikoyan before: he had to guess only the opinion of Comrade Stalin; now, in the days of collective leadership, it was necessary to understand what exactly the other members of the leading four think about Beria. - / B. S. /). The main brake was that I wanted to maintain the unity of the team. It was difficult to recognize

quickly and in one sitting to make such a decision, an unprecedented decision in the history of our party (and again Anastas Ivanovich is cunning: the "enemies of the people" Kosior, Eikhe, Chubar and Postyshev were arrested either when they were members of the Politburo or soon after they were expelled from there. - /B.S./). Knowing the negative sides of Beria and condemning him, it was still difficult for me to agree to the arrest of a member of the Presidium of the PC. However, during the discussion, the complete adventurist appearance of Beria became clear and the danger of a conspiratorial threat became clear. This led to the complete isolation of Beria and the unanimous decision to arrest him."

In this way, Mikoyan wanted to create the impression among the participants of the plenum that only during the meeting of the Presidium on June 26 did the

the decision to arrest Beria, that there was no prior agreement between the members of the Presidium. True, apparently, Khrushchev and Malenkov brought Anastas Ivanovich up to date only at the last stage, and he remained in the dark that the action against Beria had been prepared for a long time and in earnest.

Mikoyan also repeated the Khrushchev-Malenkov version that Beria was going to use the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the unseemly purposes of fighting against the collective leadership and creating a cult of his own personality: "What was Beria's double-dealing expressed? At first I told him: why do you need the NKVD? [13]

And he answered: it is necessary to restore the rule of law, such a situation in the country cannot be tolerated. We have a lot of arrested people, they need to be released. The NKVD should be reduced, the guards should be sent to Kolyma and one or two people should be left for protection. These are the statements he made. And then, when it came to work, he began to do the opposite, twisted it even more. When he spoke on Red Square over the coffin of Comrade Stalin, after his speech I said: there is a place in your speech to guarantee every citizen the rights and freedoms provided for by the Constitution. This is not an empty phrase in the speech of a simple speaker, but in the speech of the Minister of the Interior it is a program of action, you must fulfill it. He answered me: I will fulfill it. And then he made a proposal to arrest people for ten years without trial or investigation (in fact, Beria was going to abolish the Special Conference altogether, but Mikoyan had to at least somehow balance Beria's liberal actions in the eyes of the plenum participants, such as amnesty and rehabilitation of Kremlin doctors. - / B. S./)...

In the early days, he advocated a cult of personality. We understood that there were excesses in this matter even during the lifetime of Comrade Stalin. Comrade Stalin sharply criticized us. That which is creating a cult around me, said Comrade Stalin, is being created by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. We could not then correct this matter, and it went on like that. It is necessary to approach the individual in a Marxist way. But Beria stood up. It turned out that he wanted to undermine the cult of Comrade Stalin and create his own cult. (Laughter) But this must be done in collective leadership. This soon became apparent when the decision of the Central Committee on the western regions of the Ukraine and on Lithuania was appended with its report. Moreover, the decision of the Central Committee was not signed by the members of the Presidium, not a single name is mentioned there, but there is only the name of Minister Beria, where all the instructions are given in the report. It was necessary to work out a solution with one surname Beria. It was double dealing. To endure the cult of self,

he sought to ensure that the departmental ministry, which he led, even when these interests were wrong, to defend to the end.

I wonder how the decision of the Central Committee and the report of the Ministry of Internal Affairs attached to it, sent under the heading "secret" could contribute to the creation of the cult of Beria? Moreover, most of those party apparatchiks to whom these documents were sent were not at all enthusiastic about them. It seems to me that Beria sent out his report with a purely practical purpose - to give a broader interpretation, to clarify the decision of the Presidium of the Central Committee, which, by the way, according to established practice, was not signed by its members.

In addition to Molotov, he recognized at least some advantages for Beria on

plenum only Andreev. He stated, arguing with the statement of the Chekist-technocrat A.T. Zavenyagin that Beria was not an organizer of production, but a technocrat: "I do not agree ... with Comrade Zavenyagin that he (Beria. - / B. S. /) was a narrow-minded person. No, comrades, we should not underestimate He was a smart, very dexterous enemy, otherwise he would have been exposed long ago, but he held out, look how long ...

He is very similar to Tito.

Voices from the audience Correct.

Andreev. He has a past, fought under the banner of the Communist Party, etc. But in fact he liquidated everything and became a fascist. They have a common tactic to a certain extent, and it will be dictated by the new tactics of our enemies.

Of course, comrades, people will ask how this is linked, everyone had the idea that Beria did a great job, but turned out to be such a scoundrel. But the fact is that the enemy, in order not to expose himself, is forced to do useful work with us, that he was forced to do useful work, used, otherwise he failed in three ways, especially in our Soviet conditions, where thousands, millions of eyes are watching for an individual person. He certainly did a great job at times, but it was a cover-up job, and therein lay the difficulty of unmasking him. He created a halo that during the war he carried out major work, etc., blackmailed in the name of Comrade Stalin. It was hard to expose him."

Good, however, was the camouflage work! From the speech of Beria's long-term deputy for the Special Committee of the First Main Directorate, and earlier for the NKVD A.P. Zavenyagin, the participants in the plenum just heard: "Comrade Malenkov said that the decision to test the hydrogen bomb was not reported to the government, was not reported to the Central Committee and was taken by Beria alone. I was a witness to this story.

We have prepared a draft government decision. He lay down with Beria for a while, he took him with him to read, or something. We had the idea that perhaps he had spoken to Comrade Malenkov. There was such a thought. After two weeks, he invites us and begins to look at the document. I read it. He is at home, apparently, once he read it, he begins to correct it. Comes to the end. Signature - Chairman of the Council of Ministers Malenkov. Strikes it out. Says it's not required. And puts his signature.

What, comrades, is a hydrogen bomb? This is the most important question now, not only of technology, not only of the work of the former First Main Directorate, now the new Ministry of Medium Machine-Building, it is a question of world importance.

At one time, the Americans created an atomic bomb, detonated it. After some time, with the help of our scientists, our industry, under the leadership of our government (Avraamy Petrovich diplomatically kept silent about the decisive role of Soviet intelligence in mastering the secrets of the atomic and hydrogen bombs, which was subordinate in this area to the same Beria. - / B. S. /) we have eliminated this monopoly of the US atomic bomb. Americans saw that the benefits

lost, and by order of Truman began work on the hydrogen bomb. Our people and our country are not foolish, we also took up this matter, and as far as we know this issue (again, thanks to intelligence. - / B. S. /), we think that we have not lagged behind the Americans. This bomb is dozens of times stronger, and its explosion means the elimination of the second American monopoly, that is, it means the most important event in world politics, and the scoundrel Beria allowed himself to decide such a question apart from the Central Committee.

He who has ears, let him hear! From the speeches of Molotov, Zavenyagin and Andreev, from the report of Malenkov it clearly followed that the scoundrel and agent of international imperialism Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, in order to mask his main criminal activities, skillfully organized for the Soviet leadership the solution of the most important foreign policy problem: the elimination of the US monopoly on nuclear and thermonuclear weapons. Is it possible that the American imperialists entrusted him with this too? Was Washington really thrilled that Stalin and his successors had atomic and hydrogen bombs? None of the plenum participants would have believed in such nonsense. Consequently, none of them should have had even the slightest doubt that all the accusations made against Beria were pure lime. However, the members of the Central Committee, as soon as they learned about the arrest of Lavrenty Pavlovich, probably immediately guessed that there was a banal struggle for power. It's just that three bears did not get along in the same den with the fourth one and, in order to solve the housing problem, simply ate the opponent. Soon Nikita Sergeevich and two other bears were thrown out of the den, only, thanks to him, he did not eat.

The participants in the Plenum knew well how to stigmatize a defeated leader. They didn't even need to be instructed in advance. They immediately recalled everything that was and was not, all their clashes with Lavrenty Pavlovich, all the cases when he annoyed them with something, presenting it as sabotage, for deliberately undermining the country's economic power and its foreign policy (Mikoyan considered Beria's objections as such against the supply of 300 thousand tons of Indian grain).

As for the fact that Beria arbitrarily signed a decree on the preparation of tests of a hydrogen bomb, both Malenkov and Zavenyagin were cunning. Let us give the floor to the father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, Academician Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov. Here is what he writes in his memoirs: "Preparation for testing the first thermonuclear charge was a significant part of the entire work of the facility in 1950-1953, as well as other organizations and enterprises of our management and many involved organizations. It was a complex work,

which included, in particular, experimental and theoretical studies of gas-dynamic explosion processes, nuclear physics research, design work in the truest sense of the word, the development of automation and electrical circuits of the product, the development of unique equipment and new methods for recording physical processes and determining the power of the explosion. Enormous efforts with the participation of the largest number of people and large material costs required the production of substances included in the product, other production and technological work.

Consequently, the preparation of tests of thermonuclear weapons was not a one-time process, stretched out for three whole years and took place for the most part during Stalin's lifetime.

Surely, not one, but many resolutions were adopted, and it is not clear which of them Malenkov and Zavenyagin had in mind. According to Sakharov, preparations for testing the hydrogen bomb were completed in July 1953, and, as is known, they took place on August 12. And the same Sakharov describes the procedure according to which the resolutions on the Special Committee and the First Main Directorate were drawn up: "Malyshev (Minister of Medium Machine Building. - /B.S./) was" Malenkov's man ". He later told in a more or less narrow circle that Malenkov himself, already being the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, before the fall of Beria knew nothing about the work on thermonuclear weapons - no information about them went beyond the scope of Beria's apparatus. I already knew that the "Decrees of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Central Committee of the CPSU "actually represent the decisions of Beria and his apparatus, but did not assume that they were classified even from the Chairman of the Council of Ministers."

Well, that the work on the hydrogen bomb was classified from the Chairman of the Council of Ministers during Stalin's tenure in this post, of course, it is impossible to say. Beria certainly reported to him regularly about everything. Although they were kept secret from the rest of the Government members even then, and government decrees on the Special Committee were prepared by Lavrenty Pavlovich and his people. As for Malenkov, it cannot be said that he knew absolutely nothing about the thermonuclear project. After all, he was still a member of the Special Committee and, in this capacity, he certainly ensured the implementation of some of its decisions. Recall how P.L. Kapitsa, in a letter to Stalin in November 1945, accused Malenkov of behaving like a "superman" in the Special Committee. Another thing is that Georgy Maksimilianovich had no idea about the technology of creating a hydrogen bomb, although, judging by his speech at the plenum, the term "hydrogen bomb" was familiar to him. In a letter that Beria sent from prison to "dear Georgy" on the eve of the opening of the plenum, the prisoner reminded: "I reported to you in passing, and instructed the Government to draw up a detailed report on the state of our atomic affairs. Several explosions should be carried out this year, including one heavy-duty model, equal to 250-300 thousand tons of TNT".

Obviously, Lavrenty Pavlovich reported to Georgy Maksimilianovich about the hydrogen bomb in passing, considering it superfluous to acquaint him with a detailed draft resolution containing a lot of technical details, the essence and meaning of which Malenkov still had no idea. After the death of Stalin Beria

just started to prepare a popular report for Malenkov and other members of the Government to give them an idea of the state of work on nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, but this report was not completed before his arrest.

I will also add that in the last years of Stalin's life, when Iosif Vissarionovich paid less and less attention to business due to deteriorating health, many important decisions were not made for months, and important documents were not signed by him. Naval Minister N.G. Kuznetsov testifies:

"When I was transferred to another job in 1947, Stalin still personally led the meetings of both civilian and military ones. When I returned to work in Moscow in 1951, the situation was completely different. Even at a meeting in the Central Committee on naval issues (replacement

Minister of the Navy) he was only twice, and then instructed to lead him to his deputies.

In conversations (he appeared less and less in his office) he increasingly complained about his old age, saying half in jest, half seriously that he increasingly had to get nervous and swear. I have seen him twice in the last six months. He entrusted the management of affairs to his deputies. Major issues were thought up to be solved by "triples" or "fives". Malenkov and Beria were then held in high esteem by Stalin. Molotov - in the shade, and his burnt - P.S. The pearl was imprisoned. At that time, Bulganin tried with all his might to get into the "all-powerful troika". The developed draft decisions were sent to Stalin for approval. Later, a long list of questions was drawn up and sent to his dacha, and his visa served as an approval for all of the above.

Before our eyes there was a decrease in Stalin's activity, and the state apparatus worked less and less clearly. There were only skillful replies. Sending papers to some minister formally removed responsibility from one and did not impose it on another, and everything calmed down "until better times." Everyone understood that something abnormal was happening in the state. Some kind of "central stop" was formed, in the words of Stalin himself, but no one undertook to change the situation, and indeed could not. The heads of ministries began to adapt to such an unsystematic system. This went on until March 1953 ...

The re-organization of the two ministries (the armed forces and the navy. - / B. S. /) in 1951 was almost no different from the pre-war organization of 1938-1939, the two ministries, in the absence of coordination from the government, were forced to repeat all the mistakes of the pre-war years. Not official, but their actual leader was Bulganin, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, who could, if desired, correct the poor organization with deeds, but this, alas, did not happen. His old dislike for the fleet and my reappointment as Minister of the Navy, contrary to his wishes, had their full effect. There was a sense of hostility both to me personally and to the fleet. The wheel was spinning. The papers that came to him were drowning in his apparatus with formally bureaucratic resolutions: "consider", "report", "request the opinion of Comrade Malyshev", etc.

"Centrostop" in these years in the entire state apparatus reached its apogee, bringing great harm to state affairs. We were not just marking time, not deciding what was overdue, but also, spending huge amounts of money on old equipment, throwing money down the drain.

Taking into account all the harm caused by the current system to the state, I decided to write a report (June 31, 1952. - /B.S./), with which I personally put myself at risk. But the worst thing is that even this cry was not able to break through the wall that was formed between the living thing and the physically weak Stalin, who, in fact, was no longer fulfilling his duties.

But, unlike the navy, the industries subordinated to the Special Committee in the early 50s developed quite safely, without any significant interference caused by Stalin's ill health. Of course, it played a role that atomic and

rocket weapons had been given the "green light" even earlier, and officials were careful not to put spokes in the wheels in this area even when there was no Stalinist signature or visa on the document. But Beria's personality also played a role, his willingness to take responsibility. I am sure that under such conditions, Beria was often forced to sign government decrees on the Special Committee himself. After all, time in the nuclear and thermonuclear race was very expensive, it was impossible to limit oneself to replies here, and for failure and the aged Stalin, he would still have taken his head off Lavrenty Pavlovich.

By the way, the decrease in Stalin's activity in the last two years of his life was most likely the reason why things were slowly unfolding related to the fight against "rootless cosmopolitans", including the "doctors' case".

It is also possible that after the death of Stalin, Lavrenty Pavlovich considered that all four members of the leading four were, as it were, equal deputies of the Great Pilot, each in his own field, and decided that he could independently decide on the issue of testing a hydrogen bomb. All the more so since the resolution that caused the fuss to flare up at the plenum was not the last to die - about the explosion of the "product" at the test site, but only on some preparatory measures, albeit very important ones. Undoubtedly, the direct question of the explosion of a thermonuclear device would still have to be decided by the entire "four" together, if Beria had not been arrested earlier.

Perhaps Malenkov considered himself offended that he was not given a decree on thermonuclear tests to sign, that Beria to some extent appropriated his functions. But this event could not serve as a pretext for a conspiracy against Beria, since the chairman of the Council of Ministers learned about the existence of the ill-fated decree, as he assured, after the arrest of the "Lubyansk Marshal".

Zavenyagin's speech also contains an interesting admission that after Stalin's death, Lavrenty Pavlovich planned to cut spending on the military-industrial complex and devote it to the development of peaceful industries: , we need to save, develop industry, help culture, help agriculture, but there are issues in which we could not afford excessive savings.

atomic energy. The Americans create large bases to make bombs. Beria says: "To hell, you are throwing a lot of money, fit into the five-year plan." When the five-year plan was drawn up, it was clear what we should do for the next three years, what to build, and in the fourth year the volume of work on the construction projects that had begun was already decreasing, and in the fifth year new things should be started. Therefore, in 3-4 years, capital investments are halved against the third, and in the fifth - twice against the fourth. We could not put up with it, and the state cannot put up with it. He says: "To hell, fit into what is."

Behind these rather sophisticated arguments of Avraamy Pavlovich was a trick long practiced by the generals of the military-industrial complex: motivating the need for capital investments in new construction, significantly increase in the process of working on certain projects the amount of funds originally allocated under

five year plan. Zavenyagin and his colleagues took advantage of the fact that Stalin spared no expense to create a nuclear and thermonuclear superweapon. Here even Malenkov could not stand it, throwing a remark involuntarily confirming the correctness of Beria: "This matter will have to be controlled, because money was spent there without any control."

"That's for sure," Zavenyagin was forced to admit.

"They didn't build cities, they built resorts," Malenkov grumbled irritably.

"I can't say that they built resorts, they built cities," Zavenyagin timidly justified himself, cursing himself in his soul that, in the heat of Beria's denunciation, he had stepped onto a slippery slope.

Well, Lavrenty Pavlovich was a rationally thinking person. He knew perfectly well that by the time of Stalin's death, the main base for the creation of an atomic and hydrogen bomb had been created. Previous investments were no longer required. There was no point in accumulating an unlimited supply of nuclear and thermonuclear bombs. All that was needed was a sufficient supply, which would be enough to inflict unacceptable damage to a potential enemy. In conditions when the balance of forces of the parties was already determined mainly by the presence of nuclear and hydrogen bombs and their means of delivery, spending on conventional weapons could also be reduced. However, for the generals of the military-industrial complex, such ideas were like a bone in the throat. And they, including Zavenyagin, accepted the fall of Beria without regret. However, in the accusatory pathos of Avraamy Pavlovich there was also the motive of self-preservation: he was afraid that, for his former closeness to Beria, the Special Committee would not count him among his accomplices in a hastily invented conspiracy.

Beria's successor at the head of the First Main Directorate, turned into the Ministry of Medium Machine Building, V.A. Malyshev was one of the few at the plenum whose career continued successfully after the fall of Lavrenty Pavlovich. Previously, he reported to Beria as People's Commissar for the Tank Industry, Chairman of the Committee for the Introduction of New Technology and Minister of Shipbuilding (in the part related to the production of sea-based missiles) and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. After Stalin's death, Malyshev was removed from the Presidium of the Central Committee and from the deputy heads of government and demoted to the Minister of Transport and Heavy Engineering. Probably, Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich associated this decrease with the intrigues of Lavrenty

Pavlovich. And in his speech at the plenum, he denounced the leadership style of the "Lubyanka Martal" with pleasure:

"I, as a minister ... worked under the leadership of several comrades - both Comrade Molotov, and Kaganovich, and Beria. I must say that every time you go to report on some issue to your comrades, you go with a different feeling. With one with feeling you go to Comrade Molotov, about whom we know that he is a strict leader, demanding, but always, when you go to him, you know that there will never be hasty decisions, adventurous decisions, never you, even if you made a big and serious mistake, you will not be under the blow of some kind of mood. Here is Comrade Kaganovich - sometimes a quick-tempered person, but we know that they are quick-tempered, he will flare up, but quickly and move away and always correctly

decides. Beria is another matter. We, the ministers, knew that you were going to the office as a minister, but you didn't know how to get back, maybe a minister, or maybe you would end up in prison. The method was this: hit on the head, get out, swing. And we, the ministers, had such an opinion that a person was hit hard, everything is clear ("hit", in this case, after all, in a metaphorical sense, and not that Beria was punching one of the ministers in the face with his fist, It is no coincidence that when editing the transcript, Malyshev put the words "hit on the head" in quotation marks. - /B.S./). Roughly speaking, Beria's leadership style is dictatorial, rude, non-partisan.

By the way, about partisanship. I worked during the war, supervised tank affairs, and after the war for a year or a half I worked at Transmash for a long time, he never had a party affiliation. He somehow set up or pushed not directly, but indirectly, that the party organization should provide services, when there were orders to the secretaries of the regional party committees, they would say that there was a goad - you do this, do another. (Voices. Right)

Malyshev. There was no provision for him to teach us, to ask the party organization for help in organizing party work, and so on. He considered the secretaries of the regional party committees to be dispatchers. What business he will undertake, in such a case the secretary of the regional committee is a dispatcher. Of course, it depressed us. We thought that something was wrong here, we forgave, we thought that a person is doing a great job, getting excited, probably, it's necessary ... Of course, we reckoned with authority, we considered him infallible, and sometimes we were afraid, despite the position their members of the Central Committee, they thought so, why is there a sin

conceal.

Many of us saw how Beria, literally every day, especially after the death of Comrade Stalin, became more and more impudent and unrestrained. He ruthlessly put pressure on people with his high position. Beria categorically commanded, dictatorship, he insulted, drowned out people, including ministers and members of the Central Committee. At every step, he emphasized his power and showed that what he was doing, all this was being done on behalf of the party, on behalf of the government, and if there was no formal decision today, he would do it anyway. And we had the impression that if Beria wants, then he will carry it out.

Probably, Malyshev did not lie about the rough, authoritarian, dictatorial style of leadership on the part of Lavrenty Pavlovich. I just forgot to add that when you didn't take hasty and

authoritarian decisions in Molotov and under the quick-witted Kaganovich, neither the atomic, nor the rocket projects, nor the projects for the development of jet aviation got off the ground, and things started only when they began to be directly led by the "non-party leader" Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, of course, and brains Ministers gladly cleared and execution, when necessary, frightened. Otherwise, it was probably impossible to lead in an administrative-command system, where everyone answered only to a higher boss and was maximally constrained in showing initiative. True, in the future, after the "thaw", they no longer threatened to be shot. They promised only in case of non-fulfillment of the plan or the order to remove them from work or "throw them on the periphery" (a terrible threat for Moscow officials).

It is unlikely that Vyacheslav Alexandrovich came up with the fact that Beria

did not put a penny on party secretaries and regarded them as nothing more than dispatchers for the implementation of the tasks of the Special Committee. About the same, the son of Lavrenty Pavlovich Sergo writes: "My father's relations with the party bodies were always difficult ... His father never hid his relationship with the party apparatus. For example, he directly told Khrushchev and Malenkov that the party apparatus was corrupting people. All this was good at the beginning, when the Soviet state was just being created. And who, their father asked, needs inspectors today?"

He had the same frank conversations with industry leaders and plant directors. Those, of course, could not stand the loafers from the Central Committee.

Father was just as frank with Stalin. Iosif Vissarionovich agreed that the party apparatus had shied away from responsibility for a specific case and, apart from chatter, was doing nothing.

And Beria, according to his son, carried out the promotion of cadres on the basis of business qualities, and not on the principle of party membership. For this, Malyshev criticized him at the plenum. Sergo Lavrentievich claimed: "A lot of people at that time made a career with the help of their father. Among the most famous are Ustinov, who was appointed on the recommendation of my father to the post of People's Commissar for Armaments at a very young age, the same Vannikov, Tevosyan, Minister of the Chemical Industry Pervukhin, Deputy Chairman of the Council Ministerov Malyshev, Chairman of the State Planning Commission Saburov, the latter, an economist by education and an extremely capable person, did not come to the court of the party elite, because he had never worked in party bodies, and this was a serious shortcoming in the eyes of the nomenklatura. one area. And although many were against the nomination of Saburov, my father insisted. His father always knew how to fight for people of business, and it did not matter what position his opponent occupied.

So it was with the appointment of Dmitry Fedorovich Ustinov to the post of People's Commissar. The father argued that he was a wonderful organizer and a talented engineer, and party officials in response:

- How so, Lavrenty Pavlovich? You are proposing for the post of People's Commissar for Armaments (!) a person who has not worked for a single day as a secretary of the factory party committee. He doesn't know Party work at all!

"He knows the business, and that, I think, is quite enough," my father retorted.

In such cases, Stalin often intervened, and issues with the appointment of certain people, whose candidacies were proposed by the father, were resolved in one way or another.

D.F. Ustinov was appointed People's Commissar of Armaments on June 9, 1941, two days after the arrest of his predecessor Vannikov, an old acquaintance of Beria (they graduated from the Baku Technical School together). It is possible that in the appointment of Boris Lvovich as People's Commissar for Armaments in January 1939, Beria played a role, as well as in his subsequent rescue from the cellars of the Lubyanka. There is reason to believe that by the end of 1939 Lavrenty Pavlovich

already supervised to some extent the military-industrial sphere. In any case, it was he, as we recall, who was instructed to check the state of the army and navy on the eve of the attack on Finland, and Beria's report contained many military-technical details. It cannot be ruled out that Beria began to deal with military-industrial issues long before he joined the GKO and became responsible for the production of weapons.

And Beria really fought for his people to the last opportunity. Even in letters from prison, looking death in the face, he defended his employees in the Special Committee and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in every possible way, perhaps no longer realizing, after the shock associated with the arrest, that his praises could only harm them. Not at all sympathetic to Lavrenty Pavlovich G.V. Kostyrchenko characterizes Beria's relationship with one of his closest collaborators, Solomon Rafailovich Milshtein, in this way: "Especially clearly ... care for old associates was imprinted on the fate of S.R. Milshtein, who, back in April 1937, Beria appointed chairman of the Committee for Physical Culture and Sports of Georgia Then, having become People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR, Beria, in the people's commissariat entrusted to him, reserves for Milstein the position of head of the Main Transport Directorate, having worked in which for a year, in March 1940, thanks to his patron, he becomes chairman of the Moscow Dynamo Sports Society ... In In March 1941, Milshtein was already the first deputy commissar of the forest industry of the USSR, and soon after the start of the war, again in leadership work in the NKVD (head of the Main Directorate of Security for Railway and Water Transport). from the NKVD, Milshtein felt uncomfortable there. In early 1948, he was ... appointed head of the Kazan Railway Department ... In 1950 he became the object of attacks: he was accused by the Tatar party leadership of "clogging up" the management personnel with Jews. He was also reminded that almost all of his relatives (father, mother, brother, aunt) live in the United States and another brother was shot in 1937 for espionage. And then Beria came to the rescue of a friend. Thanks to his patronage, Milstein, who was expelled from work, was appointed in March 1951 as deputy head of the construction of iron mines of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. And having become the Minister of Internal Affairs at the beginning of 1953, Beria sends Milstein to Ukraine as Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic. "Not all are listed here.

Milstein's positions. He managed, in particular, to visit both the deputy head of the department of special departments of the NKVD, and the special commissioner of the NKVD, who was responsible for providing transport for the Balkars evicted from Kabardino-Balkaria, for which he received in March 1944 the commander's order of Kutuzov 2nd degree.

After the arrest of Beria, Milylstein, who was mentioned with an unkind word at the July Plenum, was arrested, and in early 1955 he was shot. And still not rehabilitated. Although Beria's conspiracy did not exist in nature, he had practically nothing to do with illegal repressions. In the midst of the Great Purge, Solomon Rafailovich led the Georgian athletes and certainly did not sign the execution lists. And his other positions were essentially technical, having nothing directly to do with repression. But when the Balkars were evicted, Milstein had to participate. But he did not give orders to shoot anyone,

as well as orders to burn auls or evict people from their homes. Probably, Milshtein did not have to push the unfortunate into the wagons - other services were engaged in this. Today, the deportation of the peoples of the North Caucasus and Crimea is rightly qualified as a crime. But in the spring of 1944, Milstein and other executors did not consider the order given to them criminal. To be fair, there was no blood of the innocently killed on Milshtein, unlike Lavrenty Pavlovich himself and some of his other associates, such as Vlodzimirsky, Goglidze and Meshik.

I note that it never occurred to anyone in the era of rehabilitation and public condemnation of Stalin's crimes to hold ordinary executioners accountable for deliberate murders and complicity in crimes against humanity, who shot imaginary enemies of the people. And the higher officials responsible for the deportations, like Serov and Kruglov, were never brought to trial in the USSR. I also emphasize that no more legal than the deportation of "punished peoples" to the USSR was the deportation of the Japanese population of the exemplary democratic United States during World War II. Of course, America was and remains a much richer and more well-fed country than the Soviet Union, but even there, in the camps, not tens or hundreds of thousands died, as in the case of Soviet deportations, but at least several thousand Japanese American citizens. The United States later acknowledged that injustice and lawlessness had been committed against the Japanese and other immigrants from the Axis countries and that they paid substantial compensation to everyone, but none of those who carried out the deportations was ever held accountable. True, in America, no one killed the Japanese during eviction from their native places, while during the deportation of the peoples of the Caucasus and Crimea, such excesses often happened.

Malyshev was right: Beria scolded the ministers with his last words and more than once threatened to shoot them. However, there is no evidence that he even once carried out his threat. On the contrary, Lavrenty Pavlovich saved many of his subordinates from repression. As evidenced in his memoirs by the former Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and former Deputy People's Commissar for Armaments Vladimir Nikolayevich Novikov in his memoirs, Beria defended workers in the defense industries from repression, and during the war years repressions affected them to a lesser extent.

degree than other categories of Soviet citizens. After the war, when Beria was transferred to the atomic bomb, arrests immediately began in the sphere of the People's Commissariat of Arms, especially artillery.

Even at the plenum, Beria was denounced by Tevosyan and Kaganovich, Bulganin and Serdyuk, Snehkus and Voroshilov, Patolichev and Kruglov ... In total, 25 people spoke, together with the speaker Malenkov. With rare exceptions, almost all of them ended up in political oblivion within a decade or so.

The first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, Mir Jafar Bagirov, who spoke at the plenum, under whose leadership Beria began his service in the Azerbaijani Cheka, did not spare words for his long-term comrade working in the Transcaucasus: "Comrade Malenkov's report and speeches ... comrades Khrushchev, Molotov, Bulganin and other members of the Presidium with exhaustive completeness and persuasiveness revealed the face and true methods of enemy work of this international provocateur, an adventurer of a large scale, Beria.

Beria - this chameleon, the worst enemy of our party, our people - was so cunning and dexterous that I personally, knowing him for more than thirty years before being exposed by the Presidium of the Central Committee, could not figure him out, reveal his real enemy insides. I can't explain it otherwise than as my excessive gullibility and dullness of my vigilance towards this double-dealer and scoundrel. This will be a serious lesson for me too" (the poor fellow hoped that they would not be shot after all).

Bagirov understood perfectly well that the main accusation against him was his many years of close acquaintance with Beria, and he tried not so much to denounce the defeated comrade as to justify himself. He was directly accused at the plenum that he did not report to Moscow about the conversation that Beria had with him on the issue of establishing republican orders.

"Did you call Comrade Malenkov about this?" - sarcastically inquired someone.

"I didn't call," Bagirov lamented.

"Bad," stated a voice from the audience.

"The Central Committee did not know about this," Bulganin remarked with regret.

"The Central Committee did not know, but it turns out that he was talking to the republics," Malenkov picked up. "We only found out for the first time." As if the Minister of the Interior, the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, for every call to the capital of the union republic, in fact, should receive the sanction of the Presidium of the Central Committee!

Baghirov said:

"Beria got in touch on the issue of what happened in Lithuania, what he wanted to do with Ukraine, Lithuania. He apparently tried to extend this further not only to those regions and districts that have a short period of establishment of Soviet power. He this issue to me, the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers could not and did not apply. On his instructions, they called the Minister of State Security (here Bagirov's clause - the MGB did not exist at that moment. - /B.S./) of the Republic Yemelyanov about in order to provide information on the national composition of the employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. He, apparently, so far began with this. Comrade Yemelyanov was also asked to give ideas about who he could be replaced from among the local

nationality. Emelyanov, like a dozen other comrades, was raised by the Azerbaijan Party Organization. Yemelyanov answered the man who, at the request of Beria, called that since the minister required information on the national composition, I can inform through you, but as to who can replace me, please contact the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers, because I myself am here did not sit down, I was nominated for this job.

This attempt failed. Here the comrades can say why I didn't call the Central Committee, didn't ask. I must say that we receive dozens of calls every day. Until yesterday Nikita Sergeevich called me, didn't tell me, I didn't know, and when he told me, then

it didn't surprise me. After all, Beria sat in the Presidium of the Central Committee and called us ... "

"No one is bringing charges against you," Malenkov interrupted Bagirov irritably, "it is about exposing Beria.

"You explain it this way, because everyone knows and I know," Khrushchev entered into the discussion. - When they met you and asked - Beria called, you say - no, but I say - he was arrested. You know him more than others, that's why people say, you have to tell, you knew him more than I did, although I also knew him very well.

- That's right, - buzzed people from the hall.

- Concerning calls, - Bagirov continued noticeably drooping. - I left here after the death of Comrade Stalin on March 16th. During this time, he called me once. During the 15 years of my stay here in Moscow (I do not want to absolve myself of responsibility for the fact that I could not get to the bottom of this man, I do not say this to justify myself), I was at his house once, and then with Comrade Stalin, and the rest of the time he always met like that, or he called for me. But especially in recent years, for some reason, he avoided.

- Comrade Bagirov, - a voice rang out from the spot, - when you start making excuses, you don't do it in full voice. You say that the Central Committee has forgotten in recent years...

- I? Bagirov was surprised.

- Went to the boss - confirmed an unknown member of the Central Committee.

- I? Bagirov was even more surprised.

"And they went all the time to Beria," summed up the anonymous source.

Now Bagirov felt the breath of mortal danger, but still tried to finish his exculpatory speech. It turned out pitifully: "I don't know if the comrades have such a reason to make such a demand to me, maybe there is one, but I, for example, never forgot the Central Committee for a minute and on all issues, when I needed to resolve them, I always called to one of the secretaries of the Central Committee. I could not consider Beria the chief of Azerbaijan, although he tried to do it. That is another matter. Maybe Comrade Ignatov will speak and speak in more detail, but I cannot take it upon myself that I bypassed the Central Committee. I'll tell you more: whenever I was here, I went to the Central Committee, and to all ministries, to all organizations, and for that matter, very rarely when Beria was alone.

- This is another matter, - someone in the hall remarked with satisfaction. Finally, Mir Jafar Abbasovich began to inject!

- I want to tell it like it is. It is up to the Plenum of the Central Committee how it will react.

And the participants in the plenum reacted very harshly. M.A. Suslov evil remarked:

- The instructors of the Central Committee were afraid to go to Azerbaijan.

- To Azerbaijan? - portrayed Baghirov's surprise.

- Yes, in Azerbaijani organizations, - Suslov confirmed, - they were afraid that you have a boss.

- I don't know, maybe, - Bagirov was confused.

"Comrade Bagirov," Malenkov interrupted him, "you are making excuses, there is no need for this. You were close to Beria, this issue is not being discussed now.

- That's right, - Georgy Maximilianovich was supported.

"And that's why the plenum is perplexed," continued Malenkov. - You defend yourself. You were seen more than all the others embracing Beria. (Malenkov preferred to forget how Nikita Sergeevich had just pretended to repent, how he and Georgy Maximilianovich hugged Beria, of course, for the good purposes of exposing the enemy of the people! / - B.S. /). That is not the point at all, there is no need to talk about it, he is exposed.

Bagirov was completely confused, what did his senior comrades want from him, either exposing Beria, or, on the contrary, self-exposing him, Bagirov, of close ties with Beria. It seems that in fact Malenkov and Khrushchev needed the latter. And this in the future threatened the leader of the Azerbaijani communists with a death sentence. And in a low voice he finished his muddled and confused speech:

"I said about the exposure, and about what Nikita Sergeevich said yesterday, I said.

The exposure by the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Party of this hardened, cunning and cunning enemy, the indecisive actions of the Presidium at one time, are the best proof of the correctness and far-sightedness of the Party (Here the head of the Azerbaijani communists completely reported. - /B.S./). This is a guarantee, a sure guarantee, that any attempt, on whose part it may be, to shake the unity of the ranks of our Party will be mercilessly crushed...

I, comrades, do not know, I believe that I was, am and remain until the end of my life faithful to the great precepts of Lenin-Stalin, a faithful soldier of my party, at any moment ready to carry out any tasks of the party and government.

I'm not making excuses, I just want to say that it hurts me to listen to some of the remarks of my comrades. Maybe there are many mistakes in my work, but the only thing I always do is one thing: serve the party, serve the people, serve the country, serve socialism, serve communism - that's all I can say.

This speech did not save Bagirov, although it cannot be said that it ruined him. The fate of the unfortunate secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan was by no means predetermined by the thousands of innocents whom Baghirov killed during the Great Purge. And not because in terms of abuse, nepotism, bribery, luxurious palaces built for Bagirov himself and his relatives, Azerbaijan,

as shown by the checks carried out under Stalin, he occupied almost the first place in the Union. Comrades from the Presidium of the Central Committee decided that

Mir Jafar Abbasovich will no longer serve communism. The collapse of Bagirov was caused by his proximity to Beria. Immediately after the July plenum, Bagirov was removed from the leadership of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, arrested in 1954, and shot in 1956 on charges of illegal repression. S.F. was tried together with Bagirov. Emelyanov, who received 25 years.

Another participant in the plenum, V.N., was also shot. Merkulov, but already together with Beria. The rest survived, but their careers, in the vast majority of cases, stalled or turned back. So we can say that Beria was condemned mainly by the politically dead people. And many of them remained in history only thanks to Lavrenty Pavlovich. Zavenyagin, for example, is remembered only as Beria's deputy. Basically, in the hall there was a gray secretarial mass, which, not without pleasure, trampled on the one who in some way towered above the general, very low intellectual and business level of the nomenklatura. And not without masochistic pleasure, they recalled how Lavrenty Pavlovich humiliated them, sent them to their mother, threatened them with execution. And they forgot that otherwise they were simply not used to working. In the totalitarian system of power, only hard pressure from above, under Stalin - up to the execution of negligent executors, forced the lower echelons of power to work in full force. After all, there was no control and pressure on the part of the voters, and there could not be - in the elections, 99.9 percent always voted "for". But nomenclature could not exist in any other system. Beria stood head and shoulders above the vast majority of the participants in the plenum in terms of his businesslike qualities. And it is unlikely that he differed for the worse from them in terms of his moral qualities. Unless Lavrenty Pavlovich had much more blood on his hands than ordinary members of the Central Committee, but this was already ex officio - after all, he was a member of the Presidium (Politburo), and at such a time. He set out to change the system. And he paid with his life.

THE FINAL

Before I understand when and how the "Lubyansk Marshal" died, I want to give the floor to his jailer - the commandant of the headquarters of the Moscow Air Defense District, Major Khizhnyak. Here is what he said in an interview with the Vechernyaya Moskva newspaper on July 28, 1994:

"... They left the building (Council of Ministers. - / B. S. /) Generals Moskalenko, Bakeev, Batitsky, Colonel Zub, Lieutenant Colonel Yuferev - the adjutant of the commander, Colonel Erastov. Beria was among them. Yuferev got into the car to the left of Beria, to the right "Batitsky, Zub and Moskalenko are opposite. They set off. Ahead is the ZIS-110, followed by vehicles with fifty submachine gunners. After forty or fifty minutes, they arrived at the garrison guardhouse ...

On the twenty-seventh, the commander (K.S. Moskalenko. - /B.S./) called me and said that I was entrusted with the care of Beria. I have to cook food, feed him, give him water, bathe, cut, shave and, at his request, go with the general on duty to his call ... When the commander said that I was attached to him, they told me: "Bring food." Went

General Bakeev, Colonel Zub, and I brought food... Good food, from the soldiers' canteen. He was sitting on the bed, such a well-fed man,

sleek, in pince-nez. There are almost no wrinkles, the look is hard and angry (there was reason to be angry! / - B.S. /). Height is approximately 160-170 centimeters. Dressed in a gray suit, worn. At first he turned away, not looking at anyone. Youmu is told: "You eat." And he: "Have you brought a pencil and paper?" "They brought it," the commander replied. He immediately began to write ... When I gave him something to eat, he poured this bowl of soup on me - he took it and poured it out (for Major Khizhnyak, the soldier's soup was probably good; Beria was used to more refined food and, most likely, he perceived what was brought to him as a camp gruel, and after all that had happened, Lavrenty Pavlovich's appetite, for sure, disappeared - from the experiences, a nervous breakdown occurred. - / B.S./). Everyone was outraged. Strictly warned. But paper and pencil were left to him. At that time, he did not eat at all ...

I was daily, up to twelve times a day. Soon he was transferred to the district headquarters on Osipenko Street, 29. We stayed there for three or four days, and then they transferred him to a large bunker, where there was a command post, in the courtyard of the headquarters building ... "

When asked by a correspondent how long the trial of Beria lasted, Khizhnyak replied: "More than a month. Every day, except Saturday and Sunday. They worked from 10 am to 6-7 pm. Of course, with a lunch break." The former commandant also refuted widespread rumors that before the execution, Beria asked for mercy on his knees: "It didn't happen. I was with him from the very beginning to the end. No knees, no requests ... When he was sentenced, General Moskalenko ordered me to go home (Beria lived on the corner of Kachalova street [14] and Vspolny lane) and bring Beria another suit (before that he was always in gray, in which he was arrested in the Kremlin). I arrived, there was some woman there. I said who I'm like that. I need a suit. She gave it to me. Black...

I changed him. I burned the gray suit, and changed into a black suit. When he changed clothes, he already knew that they were already preparing him.

With two carpenters, we made a wooden shield about three meters wide, two meters high. We attached him to the wall in the bunker, in the hall where the interrogations took place. The commander told me to make a steel ring, I ordered it, and they did it - they screwed it into the center of the shield. I was also ordered to prepare a tarpaulin, a rope. Cooked... Cooked all evening... I brought him. Hands were not tied. But when we brought him to the shield, I tied his hands to this ring, from behind.

According to Khizhnyak, before the execution, Beria behaved "nothing": "Only some kind of pallor, and the right side of the face twitched a little ... I ... read in newspapers and books that blindfolds are blindfolded before execution. And I prepared a towel - an ordinary, soldier's one. I began to tie his eyes. Just tied it up - Batitsky: "What are you tying up ?! Let him look with his own eyes!" I untied. Members of the court were present: Mikhailov, Shvernik, also Batitsky, Moskalenko, his adjutant, Rudenko ... There was no doctor. They stood six or seven meters away. Batitsky was a little ahead, took out a "parabellum" and shot Beria right in the bridge of the nose, he hung on the ring.

Then I untied Beria. They gave me another major. We wrapped him in a prepared tarp and into the car. It was December 23, 1953, closer to night. And when he began to tie wrapped in

tarp corpse, I passed out. Instantly. Kicked. And immediately woke up. Batitsky covered me with foul language. I was terribly sorry for Beria, because in half a year I got used to the person whom I took care of ... (guardianship, we agree, is somewhat peculiar).

I emphasize that the picture that a direct witness of the execution of the "Lubyansk Marshal" paints is strikingly different from the miserable end of Beria, which popular rumor ascribes to him - a prisoner howling with fear, choking with tears and Marshal Konev reasoning with him: "Palych, you yourself are dragging out time! "

Before trying to figure out what is true in Khizhnyak's testimony and what is not, I want to quote two documents concerning the death of Beria and those who were tried along with him. Here is the first document:

"Act of 1953 on December 23. Today at 19:50, on the basis of the order of the chairman of the Special Judicial Presence of the Supreme Court of the USSR dated December 23, 1953, No. 003 by me, the commandant of the special judicial presence, Colonel General Batitsky P.F., in the presence of the Prosecutor General of the USSR, State Counselor of Justice Rudenko R.A. and General of the Army Moskalenko K.S. relation to the condemned to the highest measure of punishment - the execution of Beria Lavrenty Pavlovich. And signatures: "Colonel General Batitsky. USSR Prosecutor General Rudenko. Army General Moskalenko."

And here is the second document:

"Act. On December 23, 1953, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR Comrade Lunev, Deputy Chief Military Prosecutor Comrade Kitaev, in the presence of Colonel General Comrade Hetman, Lieutenant General Bakeev and Major General Comrade Sopilnik, carried out the sentence of the Special Judicial The presence of the Supreme Court of the USSR on December 23, 1953 over the convicts:

Kobulov Bogdan Zakharyevich, born in 1904,

Merkulov Vsevolod Nikolaevich, born in 1895,

Dekanozov Vladimir Georgievich, born in 1898,

Meshik Pavel Yakovlevich, born in 1910,

Vlodzimirsky Lev Emelyanovich, born in 1902,

Goglidze Sergey Arsentievich, born in 1901,

to the highest measure of punishment - execution.

On December 23, 1953, at 21:20, the above convicts were shot.

Death was ascertained by a doctor (painting)."

Try, as in the well-known attentiveness test, to find ten or more significant differences, except for the names of the convicts, between these two documents of the same type. First of all, we can say that Khizhnyak was exactly right about one thing - there was no doctor during the execution of Beria. Because under the act of execution of Lavrenty Pavlovich there is no signature of the doctor who ascertained the death. This is the first striking oddity. How come, in relation to the secondary participants in the conspiracy, they took care to arrange everything in full accordance with legal norms, honor by honor, and they even forgot to certify the death of the main conspirator with a medical signature. Really

only to give grounds for rumors that it was not Beria who was shot, but someone else, while the living Lavrenty Pavlovich is hiding either in Argentina or in Sweden?

It is felt that the act on Beria was drawn up hastily, skipping, in particular, the year of birth of the convict. But this is also important for the unambiguous identification of the person executed. Suddenly there are two Lavrenty Pavlovich Berias in the country, differing only in dates of birth!

As for the presence of members of the Special Judicial Presence during the execution of Beria (sorry, reader, for an involuntary pun), Khizhnyak, I think, was mistaken. In any case, they are not mentioned in any way in the act on the execution of the sentence. Is it just how the audience came to stare at the execution of the once formidable "Lubyansk Marshal", asking not to enter their names in the protocol?

There is another oddity as well. The first act was signed, in addition to the direct executor of the sentence, General Batitsky, prosecutor Rudenko and General Moskalenko. It is known that the latter two were the only ones whom the Presidium of the Central Committee entrusted to interrogate Beria during the investigation. No one else from the prosecutors, investigators and generals was allowed to come close to the criminal, who knows the biggest state secrets, during the investigation. Only Major Khizhnyak looked after Lavrenty Pavlovich as a nurse for the sick, but he did not even have the right to exchange a word with him. The signature of the Prosecutor General Rudenko on the act of the execution of Beria is quite appropriate. It would seem that Moskalenko's signature does not raise questions either: Kirill Semyonovich was one of the members of the Special Judicial Presence that tried Beria. It is strange, however, that the act had to be signed by Moskalenko, and not by the chairman of the Judicial Presence, Marshal I.S. Konev. Did Ivan Stepanovich refuse? It seems not. The archive preserved Konev's order to the commandant of the Special Judicial Presence, Colonel-General I.F. Batitsky to immediately carry out the sentence against the convict L.P. Beria and present the act. On this paper there is a resolution: "The sentence was carried out at 19.50 on December 23, 1953 in Batitsky." The prescription, which is typical, is typed, and for some reason the act of the execution of Beria was written by hand. For some reason, the marshal did not want to be present while his order was being carried out. Although he seemed to be a man not a timid one. Maybe the former subordinate General Moskalenko and Prosecutor General Rudenko strongly advised Konev to save his nerves and not be present at the execution?

It is also surprising that Batitsky, Rudenko and Moskalenko did not have time to wait two hours to sign the second act - on the execution of the rest of the convicts. They preferred to entrust this to much less significant persons - Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Lunev and Deputy Chief Military Prosecutor Kitaev. And who was the direct executor of the sentence on Kobulov, Merkulov and others, is not clear from the text of the document. Either the convicts were shot by Lunev and Kitaev themselves (which is unlikely - this is not a royal affair - in their positions), or the generals Hetman, Bakeev and Sopilnik mentioned in the second act, or unknown officers of the commandant's office.

Recall that the members of the Special Judicial Presence, the chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions N.M. Shvernik (whom, according to Lavrenty Pavlovich, "the people do not know") and the secretary of the Moscow regional party committee N.A. Mikhailov, according to Sergo Beria, assured him that it was not his father who was at the trial, but a completely different person. In fairness, I note that another member of the court, Chairman of the Council of Trade Unions of Georgia M.I. Kuchava, in a conversation with the author of the book "Thirteen "Iron" People's Commissars" General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs V.F. Nekrasov stated that Beria himself, and not his double, was present at the hearing. Only Lavrenty Pavlovich was without his famous pince-nez, and it turned out that he suffered from strabismus. By the way, if the medical record of the former chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs has been preserved, you can try to check whether he really mowed. What is curious: the former head of the Georgian trade unions did not notice that Beria had noticeably lost weight during his stay in prison. This is also alarming: did Lavrenty Pavlovich really not understand what was waiting for him, and retained an excellent appetite, especially since he had to eat from the soldiers' canteen (it is known how soldiers are fed in our country).

And now let's get back to Khizhnyak's story. For some reason, the former commandant assured the correspondent that the trial against Beria lasted more than a month. And this is one of the most significant mistakes in the testimony of the former jailer of the "Lubyansk Marshal". After all, in reality, the Special Judicial Presence, chaired by Konev, took less than a week - from December 18 to December 23, 1953. I wonder where Beria was taken every day for a month from 10 am to 7 pm, with an hour break for lunch, when Beria was returned to the bunker, where he again met with Khizhnyak (as can be understood from the text of the interview, the major was not present at the trial)?

I'm going to venture a guess here. The protocol of the first interrogation of Beria published so far is dated July 23, the protocol of the last - August 26. So far, nothing is known about the existence of later protocols. Maybe after August 26, Beria was not interrogated at all? If so, then it turns out that the interrogations of Lavrenty Pavlovich lasted a little more than a month. Khizhnyak did not see Beria off to court every day at 10 o'clock in the morning, but to the investigation. And when they decided to stop the interrogations, Beria was shot without any trial. And it happened most likely at the end of August or in September.

With this assumption, many details of Khizhnyak's story receive their rational explanation. No coat or fur coat was needed for Beria, since he was taken not to court, but to interrogations. In August, even in a light suit you will not freeze. Another thing is the severe December frosts, which in December 1953 were 20 degrees below zero. Then Lavrenty Pavlovich without warm clothes would simply

I would have died before the start of the trial. And further. The commandant claims that Beria was shot in the same bunker in which he was held in custody. Meanwhile, the building of the Supreme Court had its own execution room, which had been actively used by the Military Collegium since the 1930s. In this room, obviously, Beria's accomplices were also shot. In any case, Khizhnyak says nothing that they were executed in the notorious bunker. Why was it necessary to execute Lavrenty Pavlovich separately from Merkulov, Vlodzimirsky and the others?

Khizhnyak claims that Beria was shot "closer to the night." In the act, signed by Rudenko, Moskalenko and Batitsky, the time is not so late - 19.50. You can't say that closer to night, Khizhnyak claims that preparations for the execution took several hours, "the whole evening": while they made a wooden shield and a metal ring, while they went for a new suit and dressed Beria in it. Meanwhile, court sentences in such cases, as a rule, were carried out immediately. So Konev's order contained a demand for the immediate execution of the sentence. When a colleague of Beria, Abakumov, was tried a year later, the former chief of the MGB was shot literally immediately after the death sentence was passed, as soon as they were taken out of the courtroom. Then Khrushchev and his associates really feared that the former chief of the KGB, having learned about the death sentence, might say, or, worse, write, a lot of superfluous things, and they did not delay the execution for a single extra minute.

With Beria, according to Khizhnyak (and there seems to be no reason not to believe it), they fiddled for several hours. Maybe, of course, they began to make a shield for execution ahead of time, even before the verdict was passed. Well, there is nothing impossible in this. Both Rudenko, and Moskalenko, and other members of the Special Presence knew perfectly well what the verdict would be. But it is unlikely that purely technical details would have been decided before the verdict: how to shoot Beria - separately or together with other convicts (the shield with the ring was clearly designed for only one person). And they would never dress Lavrenty Pavlovich in a different suit during the meeting. And why, one wonders, did Moskalenko have the fantasy of dressing Beria from gray to black before being shot? Does it matter what color suit you go to the next world? After all, Beria's accomplices did not seem to be changed clothes, why is Lavrenty Pavlovich such an honor?

But for what. I think Khizhnyak forgot one detail: it was not the gray suit that he had to burn afterwards, but the black one. It is not surprising to forget: immediately after the execution, out of habit, the major collapsed into a swoon. Nobody burned the gray suit, because it was needed for the person who was to play the role of Beria in court. The double probably had an outward resemblance to Lavrenty Pavlovich, although, of course, not an absolute one. So let the participants and witnesses of Beria's arrest who were present at the trial make sure that they are facing the same person, in the same gray suit in which they took him to the Presidium of the Central Committee. And so that the incomplete resemblance was not so striking to people who knew Beria, the double was put in the dock without pince-nez. It was expected that the dissimilarity would be attributed to the absence of the traditional attribute of the external appearance of the "Lubyansk martal". Indeed, in glasses and without glasses, a person often looks completely different. By the way, Khizhnyak may have been mistaken when he claimed that on the second day after his arrest he saw Beria in pince-nez. After all, in a letter to his colleagues in the Presidium dated July 1, Lavrenty Pavlovich complained: "T-shchi, please

forgiveness that I write not quite coherently and badly due to my condition, and also because of the weakness of the light and the lack of pince-nez (glasses). "The pince-nez, obviously, was taken away so that the prisoner could not open his veins with a piece of glass. True, pince-nez could be taken away not on the first day of arrest, but on the second or third.

Khrushchev, Malenkov and other members of the Presidium had good reasons not to leave Beria alive until the trial. Lavrenty Pavlovich knew a lot about each of the members of the top party leadership that they did not want to bring to the attention of their colleagues. Not without reason, immediately after the arrest of Beria, by order of Khrushchev, the archive of the former chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was destroyed. A special commission burned, without parsing or reading, 11 bags of documents, about which they drew up a corresponding act. But Beria himself probably knew the contents of many spicy papers as a keepsake and at the trial he could try to "take the enemy to the grave with him", having announced many unpleasant facts from the biographies of the "dear" Nikita Sergeevich, Georgy Maximilianovich, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich and others, arming the members of the Presidium with "fried material" against rivals in the escalating struggle for power. The experience with Yezhov suggested that, having admitted everything during the investigation, the imaginary conspirator doomed to death could recant his confessions in court and begin to cut the truth-womb. Therefore, Khrushchev instructed reliable people to interrogate the captured "Lubyansk Marshal" - Rudenko and Moskalenko, in whose personal devotion he had no doubt. But even they, it seems, Nikita Sergeevich did not trust to ask the person under investigation about the alleged conspiracy and about Beria's activities as a member of the Presidium and head of the punitive department in relation to the current Kremlin leaders. The questions that Roman Andreevich and Kirill Semyonovich asked were about harmless things that did not have political urgency. It was about the authorship of a book dedicated to the history of the Bolshevik organizations in Transcaucasia, the kidnapping and murder of the wife of Marshal Kulik (the marshal himself had already been shot for three years), love affairs of Lavrenty Pavlovich, his service in the Musavatist counterintelligence. Moreover, an amazing thing, during the investigation, Beria, if you believe the published testimony, denied everything, and at the trial he sometimes even admitted what was not really there. Before the Special Judicial Presence, he repented that he had acted "wrongly" by publishing a book about the Bolsheviks of Transcaucasia (as if things were different with the reports of Khrushchev and Malenkov!). At the trial, Lavrenty Pavlovich stated: "For a long time I hid my service in the Musavatist counter-revolutionary intelligence service. However ... even while serving there, I did not do anything harmful." Why couldn't he say that he was sent to the Musavatists on the instructions of Ordzhonikidze (after all, this was established by the investigation carried out on Stalin's instructions), and that he never concealed his service in the Musavatist counterintelligence, he honestly wrote about it in his autobiography!

Meanwhile, even from the investigators Rudenkov and Moskalenko and from the rank and file members of the Central Committee, the members of the Presidium concealed even such a relatively harmless fact for themselves as Beria's trip to the GDR. And at the trial, after all, such episodes and details could emerge, in comparison with which the actions of Lavrenty Pavlovich in East Germany would seem like flowers. So there was every reason to shut him up before the trial.

There is one objection here: Malenkov, Kaganovich and Molotov, when Khrushchev and his supporters branded them at the plenum in July 1957, did not dare to tell their party comrades about their involvement

the same Khrushchev or Mikoyan to mass repression. However, there was a fundamental difference between the position of Beria and members

"anti-party group". Khrushchev told the 22nd Congress of the CPSU that when Khrushchev's opponents realized that their cause was lost, Kaganovich called him, Khrushchev, and asked him not to do with them what Stalin would have done. Nikita Sergeevich reassured Lazar Moiseevich: "You take me for the wrong thing!" But, one must think, he made it clear to Kaganovich and other members of the anti-party group that they should not be too talkative at the plenum, otherwise he would have to recall the experience of Joseph Vissarionovich. Nevertheless, Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich came to the plenum as free people, not under escort, and this gave them hope that if they did not brand Nikita Sergeevich too much and recall episodes from the past that were unpleasant for him, then they would not only not be shot but they won't even put him in jail. But the arrested Beria was not even brought to the plenum, and by the end of the investigation Beria should not have had any illusions that they would save his life. And a person who has nothing to lose could say so many nasty things about "dear comrades" in the Presidium of the Central Committee in court that it was dangerous to let him go to court. But shooting without trial was not very convenient.

This version of Beria's death seems to me the most probable. Lavrenty Pavlovich was shot in the bunker of the headquarters of the Moscow military district at the end of August or in September 1953 without any court verdict, immediately after the end of the investigation. And it is no coincidence that the execution protocol was signed by those who conducted the investigation - the USSR prosecutor R.A. Rudenko and Army General K.S. Moskalenko. Beria was shot by General Pavel Fedorovich Batitsky. It is possible that in the future Beria's interrogation protocols relating to the period after August 26, 53 will be found. Then the time of death of the "Lubyansk marshal" would have to be dated a few days later than the last interrogation. The deadline here is December 17, because on the 18th the trial has already begun. But I think that they did not delay with Beria for so long.

Why was the trial held several months after the death of the main accused? Because the unknown double needed time to learn the role, and from Kobulov, Merkulov and others appointed by Beria as accomplices, it was necessary to obtain evidence in order to have enough material for the court performance. They did not know the big secrets of the Kremlin and did not pose a danger.

They may still object: but Abakumov was safely brought to court and even the process was called open (although all the documents seized from Viktor Semyonovich, like Beria's documents, were immediately destroyed - out of harm's way, but about how open the Abakumov process was, we have already verified). But remember: it was the end of the 54th in the yard, the first sharp fight between Stalin's heirs had already passed, and the turn had not yet come for the new ones. A year ago, they shot Beria and officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs close to him. Abakumov, whether thoroughly or not, blamed Lavrenty Pavlovich for his arrest. Now, thought Viktor Semenovich, there was a chance to expose Beria as the culprit of everything that had happened, and he, Abakumov, as a victim of Beria's arbitrariness, at least would not be shot. Moreover, the process is open (the former minister of the Ministry of State Security did not know that the entire audience in the courtroom was "brave and jury"). So Abakumov did not say too much, and when he came to his senses, it was too late. As soon as he hinted at the letter to the Politburo, he had already received a bullet in the back of the head. Beria, before that, he himself ordered

the liquidation of Yezhov and well understood that there would be no mercy for the chief of the Ministry of Internal Affairs accused of conspiracy. Khrushchev, Malenkov, Molotov and others, whose hands are up to the elbows in blood, are not going to alms. So, finally, he could put a big pig on his executioners so that it would not be so insulting to die.

But if it was not Beria at the trial, but his double, why did this double refuse to plead guilty to what he was actually accused of: conspiracy and treason? Other sins, like a book on the history of Bolshevism in the Transcaucasus and amorous affairs, were nothing more than a spicy condiment. After all, the defendant allegedly declared in his last word: "I must tell you that I have never been a traitor and conspirator and could not be. capitalism..." I think that in this case the architects of the process took the path of least resistance. They could not come up with any convincing scenario for the "Beria plot". And other defendants were bound to participate in the conspiracy. If their boss had confessed, then they, denying their participation in the preparation of the coup (and there was no reason for them to admit - it was impossible to get less "tower" under these articles), they would have been forced to ask Beria questions that would be difficult for the directors of the process find plausible answers. There could be confusion. Although the process was closed, the broadcast of the court sessions went to the offices of all members of the Presidium of the Central Committee so that they would not worry and hear with their own ears: Lavrenty Pavlovich did not say anything bad about them.

Another important evidence that Beria was shot before the start of the trial can be the following fact. The act of cremation of the bodies of six Chekists, who were tried together with a man who looked like Beria, has been preserved. But the act of cremation of the body of Lavrenty Pavlovich himself was never found in the archives. Maybe that's why legends arose among the people that Beria's body was completely dissolved in some very strong acid - so that even a handful of ashes would not remain from the executioner and traitor. Most likely, the situation was much simpler, without the creepy exoticism in the style of the Gothic novel and modern "horrors". Beria's corpse was cremated, but since this happened much earlier than December 23, and it didn't look like the burial of the convict after the execution of the legal sentence, they formalized the entire procedure as the cremation of an unknown person or recorded the body with a different surname.

My hypothesis that Beria was killed even before the trial, and a double was present at the trial instead of him, can be tried to be confirmed by an analysis of the materials of the investigation and the trial, which requires their full publication (or at least free access for researchers to documents on the Beria case). Good luck can also be found in the search for traces of a person who probably played the role of the defeated "Lubyansk Marshal" in front of the Special Judicial Presence in Sergio Beria claims that in 1958 in Sverdlovsk, where he and his mother were in exile, "we were thrown into the mailbox", which showed my father walking around ... Buenos Aires. He had never been to Argentina ... A few months later, the Vokrug sveta magazine appeared in the mailbox ... the picture was

captured ... Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria, walking with a lady along May Square in ... Buenos Aires ... The photograph was indeed dated 1958. "If my assumption about the time and circumstances of the execution of Beria is correct, then the riddle is solved simply. The double of Lavrenty Pavlovich, one way or another connected with the special services, did not cost anything five years after the death of the "Lubyansk Marshal" to be in Argentina.

And if it is proved that Beria was shot without trial, then the sentence in his case will have to be canceled - it is still not customary for us to sentence the dead to any judicial punishment.

Of course, Lavrenty Pavlovich was not a traitor to the Motherland, that is, to be more precise, in relation to his "small motherland" - Georgia. Beria can be considered a traitor, since he did his best to contribute to the absorption of the independent Georgian state by the Soviet Empire. But after all, he was tried in December 1953 not at all for this betrayal, but for an absolutely fantastic conspiracy against members of the Presidium of the Central Committee. Moreover, they declared him a British spy (since the de Musavat counterintelligence was closely connected with the British).

Today it is obvious that Beria has never been either an Azerbaijani-Musavatist, or a Georgian-Menshevik, or simply a British spy. It is also clear that he did not plan any coup d'état. Therefore, Lavrenty Pavlovich should be found not guilty of the crimes that he was accused of at trial. On the other hand, the former head of the NKVD is guilty of falsifying criminal cases and unjustified repressions, of deporting "punished peoples", of mass extermination of Polish officers and intelligentsia, representatives of the propertied classes and intelligentsia of the Baltic States, Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, of numerous deportations of "punished peoples" (although the decisions on executions and deportations were made not by him, but by Stalin). He is guilty, quite possibly, of lesser crimes - rape and abuse of office. The latter, according to statements made at the July Plenum, was expressed in the coercion of a number of women and girls, including minors, into cohabitation. However, if Lavrenty Pavlovich abused his official opportunities, then only in the amorous sphere. Neither great wealth nor luxurious palaces, like the same Bagirov, he amassed. Although on trifles sometimes he sinned. For example, in 1947, knowing as the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers about the upcoming monetary reform, Lavrenty Pavlovich placed all his savings in the amount of 40 thousand rubles in advance in a savings bank in order to avoid confiscatory revaluation. By the way, at that time, 40 thousand - a small amount. It would barely be enough to buy a small car. Lavrenty Pavlovich did not save much for more than a quarter of a century of impeccable service. By the time of the arrest, Beria's financial position had significantly improved. He was seized savings deposits in the amount of 363 thousand rubles. But the legal origin of this money is not in doubt. As Deputy Presovmina Beria had a monthly salary of 8,000 rubles and a tax-free subsidy of 20,000 rubles. In addition, in 1949 and in the early 1950s, he was awarded

two Stalin Prizes of 150 and 100 thousand rubles. Yes, by the end of Stalin's rule, the party elite, unlike the entire Soviet people, really began to live prosperously, not like in the 30s and

the first half of the 40s.

But if it is finally and firmly established that Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria was shot before the trial, then the legal situation will change dramatically. And the problem of the legal rehabilitation of Beria will appear from a completely unexpected side. Like it or not, but the prosecutor's office will then have to fully rehabilitate the "Lubyansk Marshal". It is impossible to recognize as legal a verdict handed down posthumously in court, where the accused could not be present in any way, since the world had already departed to another world. If, nevertheless, in this case, the sentence against Beria is upheld, then a wide field will open for posthumous trials. There are more than enough defendants. Here is Ivan the Terrible, and Peter the Great, and Lenin, and Stalin, and Malenkov, and Khrushchev, and Dzerzhinsky, and Menzhinsky, Molotov, Zhdanov, Mikoyan, and Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko, you see, there is enough material to sentence them to the highest measure of punishment - life imprisonment. The dead will rejoice that we have abolished the death penalty. A good plot for the theater of the absurd!

Even the former Chief Military Prosecutor of the USSR, Lieutenant General of Justice A.F. Katusev:

"In the actions of Beria after the death of Stalin, only a desire to expand the sphere of his influence, to push out his rivals was visible, but this, of course, is not an argument for accusations of a conspiracy.

Neither the indictment nor the verdict in this case name evidence that Beria collaborated with foreign intelligence until the moment of exposure and arrest, except for the allegations that he, for example, "rescued the English spy Maisky by ordering the investigation into his case to be stopped." The absurdity of such an accusation is obvious, because the USSR Ambassador to Great Britain, and then Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Academician I.M. Maisky has been fully rehabilitated for a long time.

Just as unsubstantiated is the accusation that Beria sowed enmity and discord among the peoples of the Soviet Union. From the materials of the case, it is seen that since the spring of 1953, Beria has been promoting predominantly national personnel to senior positions in the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic States and demanded that new leaders certainly speak the language of the people of the republic where they work. Did this mean sowing discord and undermining friendship with the Russian people?

Absolutely absurd, from the point of view of the law, is the assertion that Beria and his subordinates were engaged in "espionage to seize power." The Criminal Code provides for such a form of treason as espionage, i.e. transfer, as well as kidnapping and collecting information constituting state or military secrets for the purpose of transferring to a foreign state, foreign organization or their agents. The court did not establish the elements of this crime, and charges under Article 58-6 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (as amended in 1926) were not brought against the convicts and were not imputed.

Beria's accusations of committing terrorist acts against political figures loyal to the Communist Party and the people objectively need to be rethought in the light of a number of new

revealed circumstances, starting with the speech of N.S. Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and ending with the conclusions of the Politburo Commission on additional study of materials related to the repressions that took place in the period of the 30-40s and early 50s ... "

One cannot but agree with Katusev's conclusions. But the trouble is, our prosecutors cannot bear the very idea that they will have to rehabilitate not just a bad, but a very bad person, whose hands are up to the elbows in blood. And so Katusev suggests: "Beria's guilt ... is not getting smaller, he is still covered in blood from head to toe. But the qualification of his criminal acts should be different - it can no longer be based on Article 58-8 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (as amended in 1926 years), because it is unlawful to talk about terror with counter-revolutionary intent, if the destruction of innocent Soviet citizens was carried out by Beria and his henchmen on the direct instructions of the head of state. In this case, the crimes of Beria and other convicts are subject to qualification under article 193-17 p. " b "of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR of those years, where systematic abuse of power, which entailed especially grave consequences, also provides for execution."

But I strongly disagree with this proposal. After all, in 1953, no one brought Beria with any charges of abuse of power, which entailed grave consequences. To present them to him today means, in fact, to re-judge the "Lubyansk Marshal", and to judge, of course, posthumously, which is contrary to all norms of jurisprudence. After all, then, in fairness, it is necessary to judge posthumously on charges that they did not dare to present during their lifetime, and all members of the Stalinist Politburo - they have no less blood on their hands than Beria. Arrange a kind of posthumous Nuremberg for Malenkov and Khrushchev, Zhdanov and Kaganovich, Molotov and Voroshilov, Mikoyan and Kalinin ... And, of course, for Stalin himself. And then a snowball will roll... We will have to posthumously judge all the secretaries of the regional committees and republics, security officers, people's commissars and prosecutors, middle-level functionaries, and so on, up to the perpetrators of unjust death sentences... We will have to judge the figures of the later era. Here is just one example. In 1959, Stepan Bandera, leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, was assassinated in Munich. This was done by order of the top party leadership and the then head of the KGB A.N. Shelepin. In essence, this murder, in its legal qualification, was no different from those imputed by Beria and his subordinates during the investigation of the kidnapping and murder of the wife of Marshal Kulik and the arrest and murder of the Soviet ambassador to China Bovkun-Lugants and his wife staged as a car accident. But then the posthumous sentence to Alexander Nikolayevich Shelepin is just asking for abuse of power, which entailed especially grave consequences.

But what is most interesting, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of Russia, considering in 2000 the question of the rehabilitation of Beria and his comrades in the 1953 trial, did not listen to Katusev's opinion and did not re-qualify anything with respect to Lavrenty Pavlovich, leaving the previous sentence in force. Thus, they saved

legal force all fantastic accusations of conspiracy to seize power. Beria's accomplices, so to speak, were more fortunate. Some of them were now charged only with abuse of power and admitted that in 1953 they should not have been executed, but limited to 25 years in the camps. I note that the court is unconstitutional

The Special Judicial Presence, which took place in the absence of lawyers, can hardly be considered right. And this circumstance, I emphasize, casts doubt on the reliability of the evidence of the guilt of the defendants obtained during the investigation and trial of Beria and his comrades.

Legal rehabilitation, if it ever occurs, will by no means mean moral rehabilitation. Before God's judgment, Lavrenty Pavlovich has something to answer for. In conclusion, I would like to reflect on how the fate of the Soviet Union and Beria himself would have developed if the perestroika he had started had succeeded. Would the marshal have prevented the collapse of the USSR? Hardly.

Beria's reforms would have given more rights to the republics and would have raised the role of national languages and cultures. This would increase the centrifugal tendencies. In the same direction, Beria's proposal, through the redistribution of power in the localities, would consolidate the de facto priority of the allied Council of Ministers over the Presidium of the Central Committee that had developed under Stalin's dictatorship. The real levers of control, Lavrenty Pavlovich believed, should be concentrated in the Council of Ministers of the republics and regional executive committees, and let the republican Central Committees and regional committees be in charge of ideology only. Theoretically, under the conditions of collective leadership, such a reform could pass. After all, none of the four main Stalinist heirs possessed full power and did not have undivided control over either the party or the Soviet apparatus.

The reforms started by Lavrenty Pavlovich would have ended in the same way as Gorbachev's perestroika. The Soviet Union would have collapsed thirty years earlier than it actually happened, and the communist system on its territory would have ceased to exist.

Was Beria a supporter of the market, and how fair are his accusations of striving to restore capitalism? I believe that by the end of his life, Lavrenty Pavlovich, as a true pragmatist, realized the bankruptcy of the economic system of socialism. Beria saw that in the atomic and rocket projects that he had to manage, there was a copying of American and German models, respectively. Let us recall that in his conversation with Sakharov, he acknowledged the superiority of the United States in organizing production. And here is what Beria said to the secretaries of P.A. Shariya and G.A. Ordynstev about the GDR: "How could we create a united Germany out of capitalist West Germany and socialist East? We need to make Germany a bourgeois-democratic republic. We don't need to build socialism in the GDR, we don't need to plant collective farms, from which the peasants flee to the West ... "In detente relations with the capitalist countries and the end of the Cold War, he was even ready to agree to the return of the South Kuril Islands to Japan in order to help improve Soviet-Japanese relations. Probably, in the USSR, Beria would have tried to somehow transform the collective farms and gradually free

economy from ideological dogmas. But even if he succeeded in this, it would likely be others who would reap the fruits of the reforms, and not he himself.

Did Lavrenty Pavlovich set the collapse of the USSR as his goal? Doubtful. Too significant a post he held in Moscow,

to satisfy himself with the post of head of independent Georgia - the only position for which he could apply after all the peoples of the Soviet Union had gone to national quarters. This is precisely the path followed by Gorbachev's closest associate E.A. Shevardnadze, but no one, it seems, except for the very rabid supporters of the national communist idea, does not suspect him that he planned ahead of time to destroy the Soviet Union in order to sit down as president in Tbilisi. Yes, and the power of Beria, even only as chairman of the then Special Committee, was much greater than the power of the current Georgian president.

If, as a result of Beria's perestroika, the USSR had ceased to exist, its peoples would have freed themselves from the fetters of socialism more than three decades earlier and would have begun moving towards a normal market economy from much better positions than in 1991. Many more people, especially in the newly annexed western territories, would not have lost their capitalist attitude to work and enterprise, the intellectual elite would have retained a greater connection with the pre-revolutionary past, and the country's isolation from the outside world would have lasted only thirty, not sixty seconds. extra years. Probably, with such a development of events, both Russia and Georgia today would be much more prosperous countries than it actually turned out to be.

According to such a competent witness as the former head of the secretariat of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and one of Beria's speechwriters, Academician of the Georgian Academy of Sciences P.A. Sharia, Lavrenty Pavlovich was "a state worker of a non-Soviet type, recognizing as the basis of state leadership mainly organizational technology and cabinet-behind-the-scenes combinations in the placement of personnel. If we add to this the limited general theoretical, and therefore, the political outlook of Beria, on the one hand, and unconditional what organizational skills, on the other hand, must be recognized as a logical consequence of his entire previous career that after the death of Stalin he went too far, imagined himself almost an omnipotent person and lost a sense of a critical attitude towards himself.

From the point of view of an academician-dimatchik, "limited general theoretical training" could only mean ignorance of Marxist-Leninist dogmas or unwillingness to follow them. Today, such Beria would rather be brought into the asset. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of the population of Western Europe and North America, not excluding the highest state leaders, have a very weak understanding of Marxist theory (if they have any), as well as of any other theories, and do not suffer from this at all.

Well, Lavrenty Pavlovich never made a mistake about his omnipotence. Therefore, he saw the only chance to stay in the upper echelon of power in an alliance with Malenkov. As a result, Beria, like Trotsky, who was somewhat similar to him, turned out to be a good

administrator (though only in a totalitarian system), but a useless politician. In the localities, even under Stalin, power remained in the hands of party secretaries, although each of them could be leaned against the wall at any moment. After the death of the dictator, the secretaries of the regional committees and the republican Central Committees only perked up, as Beria started a thorough shake-up of the party leadership in the national

sign. Yes, and a friend of Georgy, the dream rather frightened him with his indefatigable activity, and Khrushchev skillfully fueled this fear, suggesting to the near-minded Malenkov that Beria was aiming for his place as the first person of the state. As a result, Nikita Sergeevich himself ended up in this place, to whom other heirs in March of the 53rd imprudently ceded control over the party apparatus. Georgy Maksimilianovich, in 1957, ended up in an "anti-party group" and was overthrown from the Olympus of power. But all this happened later. And in the summer of 53, the fall of Beria was welcomed by members of the Presidium of the Central Committee and the local party elite.

Probably, that characteristic of Beria, which, according to his assistant A.N. Poskrebyshchev, given to Lavrenty Pavlovich by Stalin, is close to the truth. It is contained in Poskrebyshchev's speech, prepared for the July Plenum of 1953, but never delivered. I must say right away that much in this speech is not credible. Alexander Nikolaevich, who in November 1952 lost his post as secretary of the Presidium of the Central Committee, blamed Beria for his fall (well or not is another question). And he willingly smeared Lavrenty Pavlovich with black paint (although no one could talk about Lavrenty Pavlovich in public otherwise). So, Poskrebyshchev claimed that "Stalin scolded himself strongly for agreeing with Beria's candidacy of Abakumov as head of the MGB." But we remember that Beria's candidacy for the post of head of the state security agencies then, at the end of the 45th, was not Abakumov at all, but Ryzhenko. Abakumov, at that moment, as the head of SMERSH, was directly subordinate to Stalin as the People's Commissar for Defense Stalin, and there is no doubt that it was Iosif Vissarionovich who proposed his candidacy for the post of Minister of State Security. Abakumov just started by cleaning "expensive organs" from Beria's people. Serov also recalled in a letter to Stalin dated February 8, 1948: "As far as I know, statements were made in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks that Abakumov, for the sake of his career, was ready to destroy anyone who stood in his way. This truth is known to very many honest people. Undoubtedly, Abakumov will try to settle personal scores not only with me, but also with the rest of his enemies - this is with Comrades Fedotov, Kruglov, Meshik, Rapava, Milstein and others. Abakumov told me in 1943 that he did not care when (Pavel Yakovlevich Meshik was Abakumov's deputy in SMERSH and a man close to Beria; the fact that Abakumov wanted to treat him so harshly proves once again that already in 1943 Viktor Semyonovich and Lavrenty Pavlovich were on knives. - /B.S./). Well, now, as a minister, there is a full opportunity to find another way of revenge. Meshik knows this and is careful. Abakumova and other honest comrades are also afraid." And the "honest comrades" feared not in vain. Abakumov survived them all from the MGB. Poskrebyshchev could not help but know all this. But he preferred to create the legend given by Khrushchev and Malenkov about Beria's "friendship" with Abakumov, who had been arrested two years earlier. But here's another

Poskrebyshchev's statement, in my opinion, is trustworthy: "On the whole, Comrade Stalin characterized Beria as follows: Beria fancies himself a great political figure, but he is not suitable for the first roles, he can only be entrusted with a section of economic work."

Of course, Iosif Vissarionovich himself made sure that there were no people left in his inner circle capable of playing the first political roles. So Beria, before the death of the leader, could only prove himself as an intelligent administrator, but not a politician at all. However, it must be admitted that in the unfolding after the death of Stalin

struggle for power, Lavrenty Pavlovich as a politician turned out to be much weaker than Malenkov and especially Khrushchev. Having conceived radical political and economic reforms and taken the first steps towards their implementation, Beria greatly frightened the nomenklatura, but at the same time he did not bother to look for allies, both among the party-economic asset in the field and at the very top. The Chekist reformer relied only on friendship with Malenkov, but in politics, as you know, personal friendship is of little value. You can only be "friends" here against someone. Beria, on the other hand, tried to "befriend" Malenkov not against Khrushchev or Molotov, but against the party-nomenklatura system as a whole. "Friendship" against one of the "dear comrades" on the Presidium of the Central Committee, Georgy Maximilianovich would certainly have approved. It's another matter to be "friends" against the system, the flesh and blood of which Malenkov was. He did not think of existence outside of it, and he did not know how to manage otherwise than under Stalin. It is not surprising that Malenkov easily "made friends" with Khrushchev, Molotov and other members of the Presidium against Beria.

But what was the assessment of Beria given by the former Minister of Agriculture N.A. Benediktov: "Yes, he had vices, he was dishonorable, unscrupulous - like other people's commissars, I had to suffer from him. But for all his indisputable flaws, Beria had a strong will, qualities of an organizer, the ability to quickly grasp the essence of the issue and quickly navigate difficult environment." I think it's close to the truth. I will only add that in the Soviet system, Beria's pragmatism, coupled with the KGB past, doomed him to death.

I basically agree with the opinion of G.V. Kostyrchenko: "All of them - Suslov, Mikhailov, Chesnokov, Ignatiev, Shepilov, Malenkov - ended their earthly journey in advanced years and in their beds, and they were not tormented by remorse for organizing and conducting an inhuman action back in 1953 (available in Khrushchev, Molotov and Kaganovich, who were not directly involved in the case of the "killers in white coats", but who stained themselves with no less crimes, can be safely added to this list. - / Kommersant S. /). them the main initiator of the release of illegally repressed doctors - Beria died a tragic and shameful death... The conservatives in the party apparatus (the liberals unanimously joined them. - / B. S. /) did not forgive him for the fact that after Stalin's death he allowed himself a number of independent and bold decisions and actions that were reasonably perceived by Khrushchev and other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee as an application for dictatorial power (why for dictatorial power? After all, Lavrenty Pavlovich made all decisions through the Presidium of the Central Committee. And there is no evidence that Beria was preparing a military coup. - /y. C. /) In addition, they feared that, conducting an investigation at their discretion

crimes of those in power during the reign of Stalin and using the archival materials at his disposal for this, Beria in the end may well accuse each of them of lawless actions.

And in fact, a number of post-war, as well as pre-war lawlessness, was in no way connected with the name of the "Lubyansk Marshal." He really could turn out to be clean, as Andreev expressed his fear aloud. Here are the high-profile trials of the second half of the 30s, and the "military-fascist conspiracy" of Tukhachevsky, and that part of the Great Purge that affected the workers of the central apparatus. Going down to the level of the regions, Beria would be risky. He could

remember the repressions in Georgia. But after the war, almost all high-profile cases were carried out without the participation of Lavrenty Pavlovich - here are the "case of aviators", and the "case of gunners", and the "Leningrad case", and the "Mingrelian case", and the persecution of "rootless cosmopolitans". Even the pre-war "case of a conspiracy in the Air Force" took place without the direct participation of Beria, since the NKGB and the Special Departments, which at that moment were not part of the NKVD, were involved in it. As for the crimes in which Beria participated, whether it was the execution of Polish officers and civilian prisoners in 1940 or the mass deportations of entire peoples during the Great Patriotic War, other members of the Politburo also acted as his accomplices. By the way, it cannot be ruled out that Lavrenty Pavlovich was also ready to rehabilitate the victims of Katyn, given that in 1940 he seemed to be an opponent of their execution, and now, in 1953, he was going to build relations differently than under Stalin with the countries of Eastern Europe. Katyn, after all, could be attributed to Stalin alone. Naturally, such a decision could only be made after Stalin was made responsible for the repressions of the 1930s and 1950s. Judging by the way Beria arranged the rehabilitation of the "Kremlin doctors", over time he was going to directly blame Stalin for the iniquities. But he didn't. Characteristically, Khrushchev, even after the 20th and 21st Congresses, did not dare to admit publicly Soviet responsibility for the Katyn crime. Perhaps, in particular, because in Ukraine the Poles were shot by Serov, who was close to him.

Only a very few falsified cases could be attributed to Beria's personal account, such as the execution of Meyerhold, Babel, Koltsov and some others, intricately attached to the imaginary "Ezhov's conspiracy." Here the investigation proceeded on the direct orders of Stalin, and the death sentence was not preceded by the decision of the Politburo. But even after the arrest, Lavrenty Pavlovich was not charged with these cases. After all, then one would have to touch on the topic of repressions of 1937-1938, at least in connection with the role of Yezhov. The members of the Presidium of the Central Committee did not intend to do this at that moment.

Beria, it would seem, received at his disposal a powerful weapon against Molotov, Malenkov, Khrushchev and others in the form of archival materials on falsified cases. Were Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, Georgy Maksimilianovich and Nikita Sergeevich so naive, short-sighted, frankly, stupid to put such a powerful weapon into the hands of an opponent? Indeed, by 1953 there were certainly no fools in the leadership. They went to waste much earlier. Iosif Vissarionovich was a great breeder. He needed

loyal people, but at the same time not stupid. No, I think the whole point is that Beria was given to the Ministry of Internal Affairs only as part of a pre-calculated multi-way combination aimed at eliminating a formidable enemy. After all, Lavrenty Pavlovich could use compromising evidence only after he completely put the apparatus of organs under his control. And it took many months, if not years. No one was going to give him such a term.

Perhaps, in the last days of his life, sitting in a concrete bag, Lavrenty Pavlovich remembered his words that "we have a lot of space in the turma" and regretted them. I understood what those who were sent to their deaths by his department felt.

Lavrenty Pavlovich was mourned only by his family and those closest to him.

relatives. As reported on August 25, 1953, the head of the Georgian communists A.I. Mirtskhulava, who himself was previously under investigation in the case of the Mingrelian nationalist group and rehabilitated by Lavrenty Pavlovich, "after the exposure of Beria's criminal anti-party and anti-state actions, his close relatives living in Tbilisi and other cities and regions of Georgia engage in unrestrained, malicious conversations, are sources of distribution of various provocative rumors. Mother Beria - Beria Marta, a deeply religious woman, visits churches and prays for her son - an enemy of the people. After Beria was exposed, suspicious meetings of relatives at her apartment became more frequent. " Mirtskhulava offered to send the relatives and friends of his yesterday's benefactor outside of Georgia, although all their guilt was only in kinship with the one whom the plenum of the Central Committee recognized as an enemy of the people.

The expulsion of Beria's relatives and his comrades in misfortune was carried out after the trial, by a decision of the Presidium of the Central Committee in the summer of 1954. They were forbidden to live in Transcaucasia, in the North Caucasus, in Moscow, Leningrad and a number of other cities. But even a year later, the relatives of Lavrenty Pavlovich did not calm down. On September 19, 1954, the head of the KGB, I.A. Serov reported to the Central Committee of the CPSU that Beria's mother, his nephew and niece, and cousins of Lavrenty Pavlovich, who were deported to the Sverdlovsk Region, Krasnoyarsk Territory and Kazakhstan, together with their husbands, "continue to praise Beria, assert his innocence and express dissatisfaction with the decision to evict them" . I wonder who would be pleased if for no reason at all they were kicked out of their home and thrown into the Siberian or Kazakh wilderness! Nevertheless, Beria's cousin E.D. Kvaratskhelia-Antadze and her husband A.N. Antandze was brought to justice "for vicious anti-Soviet agitation."

Also, in November 1954, Beria's wife and son, having been released from prison, were sent to administrative exile in the Sverdlovsk region, forcibly changing the name "Beria" to "Gegechkori". According to Khrushchev, Malenkov and other Soviet leaders, the very name of the defeated enemy should not have remained on earth.

Interestingly, one of those who was officially shot along with Beria may actually have survived. R.I. Pimenov recalled: "Unlike Steinberg (a former military intelligence officer. - / B. S. /), Mamulov did not bother to keep the manners of the highest

no light in clothing, or veda, or education. Looking at him, it was impossible to think that before his arrest he daily walked a personal crocodile on a leash - this juicy detail was reported or invented by the indefatigable gossip Steinberg. Mamulov, on the other hand, let out much more important news: a few years before my conversations with him, when he was still kept in solitary confinement for reasons of secrecy, he was once erroneously taken to the exercise yard, already occupied by another secret prisoner. To his astonishment, Mamulov recognized him as a high-ranking general, "whom the whole country knew," who, according to newspaper reports, was listed as shot in the Beria case. He immediately turned away, hiding his face, the warder yelled at Mamulov: "Come out!" - and led him to another courtyard, which was due to him. Mamulov could not be mistaken: he knew this man so well! He refused to tell me his last name, no matter how much I asked and

no matter how sophisticated he was in listing the names known to me from Beria himself to Ryumin and Rukhadze. He genuinely regretted that he let it slip: it seemed to him that the disclosure of such a state secret could aggravate his own fate.

Obviously, in this case, Mamulov had in mind one of those who were officially shot together with Beria, i.e. Vlodzimirsky, Merkulov, Dekanozov, Goglidze, Meshik or Bogdan Kobulov. But of all the listed persons, only General of the Army Vsevolod Nikolaevich Merkulov, Beria's former deputy as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, and then People's Commissar of State Security and part-time playwright, could be "known throughout the country". His photographs were often published in newspapers, and plays were played on the stage of the capital's theaters. And Mamulov knew him very well. He was generally considered a Merkulov nominee. Here is how the American historian of Polish origin Tadeusz Wittlin, the author of the first biography of Beria, describes the Lubyanka residence of Lavrenty Pavlovich in the late 30s: "Beria occupied five adjacent rooms. The first was intended for typists, the second and third were occupied by Beria's deputy Merkulov. The fourth room was in at the disposal of Merkulov's assistant Mamulov, who was also Beria's personal secretary. There were two opposite doors in Mamulov's room, the left one led to Merkulov's rooms, and the right one to the room of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria. For many years, Mamulov saw Merkulov almost daily, and it was really very difficult for him to make a mistake. It made no sense for Stepan Solomonovich to break a comedy in front of Pimenov with the resurrection of one of the executed Beriaites, especially since he never gave his last name, and the human rights activist never guessed that Merkulov could be resurrected. True, Vsevolod Nikolayevich Merkulov, as we have already seen, appears on the list of those in respect of whom the sentence was carried out and whose bodies were cremated. However, it can be assumed that instead of Merkulov, then, for good measure, someone else from those sentenced to capital punishment was shot. It is possible that someone from the top party leadership stood up for Vsevolod Nikolaevich, maybe his countryman Anastas Mikoyan (both were from Azerbaijan), and Merkulov was saved, especially since after the war he was no longer connected with Beria, occupying minor posts

Head of the Main Directorate of Soviet Property Abroad and Minister of State Control. Vsevolod Nikolaevich did not have any fresh compromising material on the party leaders. Who knows, maybe sooner or later Merkulov was released from prison and he quietly lived out his life under a false name? Or maybe he died later in prison or was still shot, but after 1953? Or did Mamulov still make a mistake and confuse Merkulov with someone else? This mystery will probably never be fully resolved.

zhzhzh

Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria hardly belongs to the category of people "to do life with someone." However, if you try to recreate not in the genre of life, but honestly, without closing your eyes to all the actions of this or that historical person, and especially politicians, there are very few in the world who are worthy of imitation. And this applies least of all to

Beria's comrades in the Politburo, including, of course, Stalin himself. Perhaps, if you start comparing Lavrenty Pavlovich with Joseph Vissarionovich, the comparison will be in favor of the first. Stalin was only interested in power as an absolute category. Beria, perhaps, was ready to use his power in order to do good to people, as he understood it. After Stalin's death, what he thought was the right moment to do good to Soviet citizens. And it cannot be said that Lavrenty Pavlovich intended to make progress by barbaric means, since there is no evidence that he was preparing the physical elimination of his comrades on the Presidium of the Central Committee, he was going to imprison or shoot them. On the contrary, as we remember, Beria ordered the destruction of the instruments of torture and released hundreds of thousands of prisoners. But, nevertheless, there are almost no people in the world who are ready to mourn his tragic death.

Seemingly clearly unfair accusations on which he was convicted evoke pity for the "Lubyansk marshal", and good intentions to make the Soviet social system more liberal give rise to sympathy. However, tens of thousands of people ruined by Beria make it difficult to fully surrender to these feelings. As, by the way, all the liberal-thaw movements of the same Malenkov or Khrushchev should in no way make us forget about the crimes they committed, as well as about the crimes of Molotov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan and other members of the Stalinist Politburo.

The "Beriev thaw", when those who had not been shot under Yezhov, were released, can hardly be rightly attributed entirely to Lavrenty Pavlovich. Who and when to imprison or release was ultimately decided by Stalin. What is left for Beria? Undoubtedly, the main achievement of his life was the implementation of Soviet projects to create atomic and hydrogen bombs. But for good or for evil it went to our country? Different people give different answers to this question. I personally think that the acquisition of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons by Stalin and his successors did more harm than good. Yes, such a powerful deterrent, in principle, eliminated the danger of the occupation of the territory of the USSR and its successor Russia by foreign aggressors. Now it's

especially useful when the danger of Chinese colonization of the Russian Far East arose seriously. But on the other hand, thanks to the bomb, the communist regime held out for several decades, deepening the economic backwardness of the country and even more corrupting the souls of the people. On the other hand, the chances of the Americans using nuclear weapons against Stalin, even if he had not acquired the bombs, still seem unlikely. Such a blow could only follow in the event of a massive Soviet invasion of Western Europe, and such an invasion under the conditions of the American atomic monopoly Stalin would never have dared. The successors of Iosif Vissarionovich, by and large, thought only about retaining the conquered sphere of influence, with its minimal expansion at the expense of some colonial and dependent countries. Only once did Khrushchev's attempt to plant hydrogen-tipped missiles in Cuba really bring the world to the brink of thermonuclear war. It is clear that the absence of weapons of mass destruction on the Soviet side would, in principle, rule out the emergence of such a crisis. The occupation, however, deprived of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, and therefore not capable of large-scale

aggression of the Soviet Union by NATO troops seemed extremely unlikely. It was much cheaper and more profitable, without resorting to expensive occupation, to put its natural resources at the service of the Western economy, which actually happened in the 70s and 80s. Without the atomic and hydrogen bombs, this country would fit into the world economy faster and on more favorable terms and by today would have at least partially overcome its catastrophic lag behind the economically developed countries.

What really good deeds will be left for Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria in Big History? Of course, the leadership of the military industry, and in many ways - the entire economy during the Great Patriotic War. His organizational talent and business acumen made a significant contribution to the Soviet victory in this battle, the loss of which threatened the death of our people. The March amnesty of 1953 will remain among the merits of Beria. Usually they focus on the excesses associated with it. Meanwhile, it cannot be denied that thanks to this humane act, hundreds of thousands of people, imprisoned, in general, for nothing, were able to return to normal life. Beria became the initiator of the abandonment of the unprofitable, semi-slave labor of prisoners and achieved the cessation of a number of ruinous construction projects of giants. And those who killed the "Lubyansk Marshal" could not refuse these innovations. And, finally, the rehabilitation of the doctors arrested in the case and in the Mingrelian case, which took place in the spring of 53 on the personal initiative of Lavrenty Pavlovich. personal interest - after all, his old comrades were arrested. And even then, after the arrest of Beria, some of the released, in particular, the former head of state security of Georgia A.N. Rapava, were again arrested and shot. But at least 30 thousand Returned on the initiative of Lavrenty Pavlovich to their homeland previously expelled residents of Western Georgia are worth something!

I want to finish the book with one amusing anecdote about Stalin and Beria.

Beria: "Joseph, they made a film about you, they say it's good. Let's go and see?"

Stalin: "Well, let's go."

Leave the room after watching. Stalin: "Yes, listen, Lavrenty, it's a good film. Only you know what, the actor who plays me looks very much like me. We should shoot him..."

Beria (/confused/): "Joseph, maybe we'll shave off that ... that ... his mustache?"

Stalin: "Well, or so."

Tellingly, in this dialogue, Lavrenty Pavlovich acts as a kind of humanist, moderating the cannibalistic appetites of Joseph Vissarionovich. In popular memory, at least now (the anecdote seems to be recent), Beria clearly does not act as the main villain, losing the palm here to Stalin.

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APPLICATION

THE MYSTERY OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONER VANNIKOV

Personally in hands

Tov. G.M. Malenkov

I.I. Nechaev, living Moscow 130, Novopodmoskovny 34, apt. 2; Art. engineer of the plant, mailbox 4111 of the Ministry of Automobile, Tractor and Agricultural Engineering.

Last year, a comrade who talked to me in the office of Comrade. Zuev about the case of Beria, asked me, among other things, the question whether in the 20th year, together with Beria, went to Menshevik Georgia, etc. Vannikov B.L.

This question, somehow against my will, made me turn to the circumstances of my joint work with Comrade B.L. Vannikov. Over time, analyzing in detail all the facts of our previous relations, I came to the conclusion that much in them is unclear, doubtful, and that I have no right to keep all these doubts to myself, although I perfectly understand that we are talking about a responsible comrade who uses high confidence of the party. The fact that I am the only person who could know about these facts, and yet I am already 54 years old, and my health is not brilliant.

That is why I expressed my doubts orally to Comrade Zuev, and now, at his request, I am putting them in writing.

The following circumstance prompted me to do this.

I have a friend. Someone Gordin Alexander Naumovich. He lives in Moscow at the address: B. Kommunisticheskaya, d. No. 24, apt. 84, personal phone Zh2-02-99. He himself is from Baku. Once at my place, Gordin, in a conversation, among other things, told me that Vannikova's mother had

The establishment of Soviet power in Baku maintained a brothel there. And only then did I realize that, having trusted Vannikov with responsible work at one time, in fact opening a semaphore for him on our Soviet path, I was not even fully aware of his biographical data. True, everything was simpler then, but this fact prompted me even more convincingly the need to share with you the doubts that gradually began to take hold of Comrade Vannikov's personality, all the more so since I knew that Vannikov had been working in recent years (with 1940 and later) under the direct supervision of Beria, about whom he knew at least everything that I knew, and the story of his "failure" in Menshevik Georgia and the publication of our secret documents in the Menshevik press.

After the Sovietization of Azerbaijan in 1920, the activities of the main residency of the military command in the Middle East, which I then headed, were naturally focused primarily on Menshevik Georgia and Dashnak Armenia. The rear base was in Baku. It was necessary to organize equipment at the border to resend our people in both directions. This business was entrusted to B.L. Vannikov. I must say that no matter how much I tried to recall the specific circumstances under which Vannikov joined our group, I did not succeed. I only remember well that he was not one of our cadre people who arrived from the headquarters of the front, that is, that he joined our work already in Baku after the establishment of Soviet power there. I remember that he informed me that he studied at the Tiflis Polytechnic, I think, in the 3rd year, from where he was supposed to leave for Baku, pursued by the Georgian secret police. It seems that they sent him to me, if I am not mistaken, from the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party. Somewhere I checked the data about him, got the best references, filed his personal file through the Intelligence Directorate of the Caucasian Front, from which no data compromising him was received either. For the entire period of work as the head of the transfer point, Comrade Vannikov, as it seemed to me then, showed himself to be the best side, brilliantly organized the business, helped in recruiting work and therefore enjoyed my full confidence, which was established up to

last year, when in the light of past years I began to critically reassess many things, especially after the Beria case.

What facts of our past Soviet work, besides what has been said, have sowed in my soul doubts about Comrade Vannikov's personality?

First fact. In our personnel group there was such Olga (Valentina) Legasheva. A wonderful ideological person, a 1st year student of Saratov University; member of the party. Vannikov knew that she was especially close to me both because of the charming purity of her personality and, mainly, because of her unconditional devotion to our cause. I saved her for serious assignments. And when it was time for her to go to Georgia, when crossing the border, the guide sent with her by Comrade Vannikov led her to the secret of the Georgian guards and she was shot dead. I remember that Vannikov was instructed to personally supervise the transfer of Legasheva. Then he explained this catastrophe by the fact that there were no reliable conductors at that moment, and Legashev had to entrust a random conductor. Trust in Vannikov and the fact that failures in our work were considered at that time

a common occurrence - led to the fact that this case did not arouse my suspicions.

Second fact. In our personnel group there was a certain Nikanorenko. Also a member of the party, a military commissar of the battalion, an unconditionally tested and devoted comrade to us. It was also forwarded via Vannikov, if I am not mistaken, to Batum. From the moment he crossed the border, there was no more news about him. Subsequently, unverified rumors reached me that Nikanorenko had been captured by the Menshevik secret police, handed over to the British in Batum, and "exiled" to Malta.

Third fact. Exactly the same fate befell Comrade Lobanov. He is also a member of the party, he graduated from the Saratov courses of command staff at the same time as me in 1919. He was a member of the personnel group.

Fourth fact. Comrade Pavlov was sent to us from the reconnaissance department of the front. The military commissar of the brigade, a fighting, selfless comrade, he was scheduled by me as a resident in Kutais. For better legalization, it was decided to "marry" him to a Georgian. We searched for a long time and in vain for a suitable candidate. I instructed Vannikov to contact Pankratov, head of the Special Department of the KhG Army, and find out if he had a suitable person. Soon he introduced me to a certain Ksenia Ramishvili, allegedly a party member since 1917, verified (again according to Vannikov) in secret work in the Special Department, a native (supposedly) of the mountains. Kutais. We paired Pavlov with her, about whom, since then, as well as about Lobanov and Nikanorenko, no more information has been received. Apparently he was betrayed. And I met Ksenia Ramishvili later. It must be added that subsequently rumors reached me that Pankratov turned out to be a Trotskyist, which is why I believed all the years that Pankratov, having personal scores with me, was deliberately sent to me as a provocateur. But now I'm not so sure of my judgment.

Fifth fact. After the arrest of Vannikov by the Georgian secret police (more on that later), I drove through the mountains to Tiflis. The guides were given to me by a certain Indrym, who at that time was well-known in Baku. Upon arrival in Tiflis, I was soon arrested by the Okhrana. When I was brought to the Special Detachment, I saw there Ksenia Ramishvili, mentioned above, with 2 St. George crosses and with a revolver (it is possible that she was a relative

Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia Noah Ramishvili. - /B. WITH./). Here she already openly appeared as an employee of the Georgian secret police.

Fact six. Vannikov often made me think that he should visit Georgia to check how his technique works. After the establishment of diplomatic relations with Menshevik Georgia, I agreed to his departure to Tiflis. As he himself told me, while checking documents on the train in front of Tiflis, he was arrested. In the Special Detachment he was interrogated, tortured, beaten, but he remained intact. After meeting with him, I did not see any traces of beating. I just don't remember exactly how he returned, it seems he was after the intervention of S.M. Kirov, was sent along with me from Georgia to Baku.

Fact seven. In 1920, during the Congress of the Peoples of the East, Vannikov, on his own initiative, took over the technique of resending delegates arriving illegally from abroad to the congress. As you know, at the congress, as it turned out later, there were many British agents among the delegates.

Fact eight. After the Congress of the Peoples of the East, Vannikov recommended to me a certain Veli Ibragimov. The data about him were as follows: a member of the party since 1905, a typesetter, a participant in the Schmidt uprising, a proven person, he speaks Turkish well. I appointed him as a resident in Constantinople. As it turned out later, Ibragimov contacted the Central Committee of the Turkish Communist Party, who was also going to Constantinople (or Ankara - I don't remember exactly), handed over 13 people of the Central Committee to the Kemalists, and he staged an escape with a broken leg and landing somewhere near Novorossiysk, declared to me in Rostov. (when the epic in Transcaucasia ended). Subsequently, Veli Ibragimov, being the chairman of the Crimean Central Executive Committee, was exposed as a pan-Islamist and the worst enemy of our country.

Fact nine. Back in Baku, if I am not mistaken, after the beginning of the fighting for the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia, and maybe after the Sovietization of Georgia (I don't remember exactly), Vannikov began to strongly ask me to let him go to Moscow to continue his education. I vaguely recall the specific setting of these conversations. It seems to me that these requests were particularly persistent and nervous. I let him go. In 1924, in Moscow, I met him already as an employee of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

Vannikov's further path is known. It should be noted that in no case, with the failure of our people, did the Mensheviks (i.e., the British) get our secret documents. Only in the case of Beria they published details of our intelligence work and photocopies of secret certificates.

That's what I wanted to make your property. If the facts I am citing, at least those that I have been able to recall, are only the fruit of vain and unfounded suspicion, discard them. But, in the presence of them, I do not consider my horizon sufficient for a comprehensive assessment of the personality of Comrade B.L. Vannikov.

I.I. Nechaev

07/14/54".

On the paper attached to the letter by the hand of assistant G.M. Malenkova D.N. Sukhanov wrote:

"Reported to comrade G.M. 108-113).

Who knows if Beria found out about this secret Vannikova. As for dubious ties with the Mensheviks and other anti-Bolshevik parties, here, of course, the matter is murky. You can turn it this way and that. After all, Lavrenty Pavlovich himself once served in the Musavat counterintelligence. But the past of Vannikov's mother was easy to verify from the Transcaucasian archives. And if the information reported in Nechaev's letter about her involvement in the trade in "human goods" was true, then Vannikov, if desired, could always be accused of concealing an inappropriate social origin (which, among other things, G.M. Stern got burned).

In principle, such facts as acquaintance with the pan-Islamist V. Ibragimov, the arrest of Vannikov by Georgian counterintelligence, or

the presence among the delegates of the congress of the peoples of the East, who were transported by Boris Lvovich (and there were probably British agents at the congress, otherwise the Secret Intelligence Service would have eaten its bread for nothing!), could simply be interpreted as espionage in favor of England and Vannikov should be shot along with Beria. But no one was going to make a "conspirator" and "bourgeois degenerate" out of the former head of the First Main Directorate and the current First Deputy Minister of Medium Machine Building. Vannikov lived safely to the urn in the Kremlin wall.

"SMERSH" WITHOUT CARNIVAL MASK

In fiction and documentary works written by retired Chekists, SMERSH stands out as a formidable and effective organization that put up a reliable barrier to German spies and saboteurs. We all remember Vladimir Bogomolov's novel "In August 1944 ...", where brave and noble counterintelligence officers, led by Captain Alekhin, deftly twist the enemy reconnaissance group. And at the same time, these sincere officers - real professionals help to get on the right path to people who accidentally fell into the networks of the German special services or unwittingly became accomplices of the enemy.

No, military counterintelligence did not work at all as shown in Bogomolov's talented novel - a hymn to the valiant counterintelligence officers. What the "Smershevites" actually did can be found out from Order No. 0089, issued by Commissar of Defense Comrade Stalin on May 31, 1943. Shortly before this, in April, the military counterintelligence bodies came under his jurisdiction, becoming part of the People's Commissariat of Defense, and Iosif Vissarionovich decided to scare his new subordinates a little so that they would not be too fond of amateur performances. Fortunately and a good reason was found for this - a letter from the commander of the 7th Separate Army operating in Karelia, Lieutenant General A.N. Krutikova. Alexei Nikolaevich obviously did not get along with his special department. And just then, at the end of April, he received another title. In all likelihood, Krutikov decided that Stalin favored him. And since counterintelligence is now part of the Commissariat

defense, which means that God himself ordered the beloved leader to put things in order in this economy.

The general was wrong. The Stalin order brought down severe punishments on would-be counterintelligence officers: "Checking the work of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army revealed certain facts of perversions and criminal errors in the investigative work of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army

I order:

For perversion in the investigative work of the deputy head of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army, the head of the investigative unit, Lieutenant Colonel Curzon and the senior investigator Ilyainen, dismissed from the counterintelligence agencies and condemned by the decision of the Special Meeting to 5 years in the camps.

For criminal errors in the investigative work of investigators Sedogin, Izotov and Solovyov, should they be dismissed from counterintelligence agencies?

send them to the penal battalion under the Chief of Logistics of the Red Army.

To the head of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army, Comrade Dobrovolsky, for the lack of control over the work of the investigative unit, as a result of which gross errors and distortions took place in the investigative unit, to announce a reprimand with a warning.

The assistant prosecutor of the Army, Major of Justice Vasiliev, for poor implementation of prosecutorial supervision over the investigation in the Special Department, was removed from work with a demotion and rank and sent to the disposal of the Chief Military Prosecutor of the Red Army.

To the military prosecutor of the army, Colonel of Justice Gerasimov, for self-removal from supervision and for the lack of control over the work of his assistants - to announce a reprimand with a warning.

The basis for the order was the report of the Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the head of GlavPUR A.S. Shcherbakov, who, on behalf of Stalin, checked the activities of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army. The picture turned out to be very ugly. On May 22, 1943, Alexander Sergeevich informed the People's Commissar of Defense that he had been able to establish:

"1. The Military Council of the 7th Separate Army questioned the correctness of the accusations of Nikulin and Shvedov of espionage. Based on the materials of the investigation conducted by the Special Department of the Army, the case was drawn as follows:

The German intelligence resident Nikulin, who was supplied by the German intelligence with weapons (pistol and grenades), received from the German intelligence the task of conducting extensive espionage activities in the Red Army - recruiting spies, blowing up bridges, setting fire to military depots, Soviet institutions, etc. Nikulin had at his disposal communications agents who, crossing the front line, passed on to the Germans espionage information collected by Nikulin. Among other spies, Nikulin recruited the commander of the Red Army, Junior Lieutenant Shvedov.

The review of this case yielded the following results:

Nikulin I.A., born in 1910, served in the Red Army in 1939, participated in battles with the White Finns, was wounded, after which he was declared unfit for military service. Nikulin is completely illiterate (he can only sign), he worked before the war and during the war as a carpenter at the Tikhvin timber exchange. Four Nikulin brothers serve in the Red Army. During the occupation, Nikulin lived for a month and a half on

territory occupied by the Germans. Nikulin met Shvedov at a time when the military unit in which Shvedov was located was located in the neighborhood where Nikulin lived.

According to the materials of the investigation, Ekaterina Ivanova, 15 years old, is a communications agent recruited by Nikulin. Three brothers and sister Ivanova serve in the Red Army.

Junior Lieutenant Shvedov, after several weeks of acquaintance with Nikulin, left with his unit for the Volkhov Front, near Sinyavino, from where he deserted. Shvedov was detained by the Special

Department of the 7th Army, he was initially charged with desertion and then with espionage. Some time after his arrest, Shvedov confessed to being a spy and testified that he had been recruited as a spy by Nikulin.

During the interrogation, Shvedov told me and comrade Abakumov that after the investigator Ilyayinen demanded that he name his accomplices, he, Shvedov, named two Red Army soldiers from the platoon he commanded. But Ilyayinen rejected these people and demanded to name other persons. After that, Shvedov slandered Nikulin (since part of Shvedov had just arrived at the front, the recruit soldiers, who had not previously fought, were in no way suitable for the role of German residents; Nikulin, who had been under occupation, was another matter. - / B.

Ex

Being arrested, Nikulin pleaded not guilty to anything, after being in the punishment cell he pleaded guilty to espionage.

The investigation established that there are no objective facts to accuse Nikulin and Shvedov of espionage. So, for example, Nikulin, who was illiterate in all respects and lives in a remote village, was allegedly given the following tasks by the Germans:

"I had to collect information:

On the location, quantitative composition and armament of the infantry, artillery, mortar, armored, sapper, engineering, special and rear units of the Red Army.

On the deployment of headquarters of military units and formations.

On the location of warehouses with ammunition, weapons, explosives, food, fodder, fuel and lubricants and other military property.

On the location and composition of defensive structures.

On the location of airfields and the number of aircraft on them.

About the location of air defense systems.

About the condition of the roads and the intensity of traffic on them.

On the construction of new roads.

On the political and moral state of the personnel of the Red Army units and the civilian population.

Along with the collection of espionage information, the officer instructed me to carry out acts of sabotage, organize explosions of bridges, set fire to military depots and Soviet institutions.

This part of Nikulin's testimony was written in its entirety by Senior Investigator Ilyayinen, and Nikulin, who barely knew how to sign, signed such an interrogation protocol (the resident would have been entitled to a radio station, but it had to be found somewhere else, and whether to make it from

illiterate disabled radio operator "Smershevtsy" still beware. - /B. WITH./).

The special department of the Army had a full opportunity to check the activities of the "signalman" Ekaterina Ivanova. However, Ekaterina Ivanova was not only not arrested, but was not even interrogated, although there was every opportunity for this, since she continued to live without a break in the same place (after all, investigator Ilyainen was not a completely soulless person and did not begin to destroy a minor a girl whom, by the power of his own imagination, he turned into an enemy liaison agent. - /ÿ.S./). The investigation established that Ekaterina Ivanova did not receive espionage assignments from Nikulin and did not cross the front line.

The special department had every opportunity to find out how the pistol and grenades got to Nikulin. The investigation, how the weapon got to Nikulin, established: the brother of Ekaterina Ivanova - a boy of 13 years old - once told Nikulin that he had trophy grenades and a pistol (just like in the hit of "black humor": "Vovochka found a grenade in the field ..." - /B.S./). Nikulin took away the weapon from the boy Ivanov, Nikulin gave the gun to Shvedov for bread, and used the grenades for jamming and catching fish. Employees of the Special Department could easily find out the issue of the origin of weapons by calling and questioning the boy Ivanov - the brother of Ekaterina Ivanova. This was also not done. So, as a result of an unscrupulous attitude towards the investigation, Nikulin and Shvedov were charged with espionage.

Shvedov should have been arrested and tried as a deserter. Nikulin is guilty of illegal possession and failure to hand over captured weapons, but there were no facts and materials to accuse him of espionage. The military tribunal of the 7th Separate Army rejected the charge of espionage.

The investigation of Nikulin and Shvedov was conducted by Art. Investigator of the Special Department Iljainen, Finn by nationality. Ilyainen previously worked in the NKVD and was fired.

Curzon, Deputy Head of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army, directly supervised the investigation and actively participated in it. Curzon worked in the NKVD from 1929 to 1938. In 1938 he was arrested on suspicion of involvement in a counter-revolutionary organization. Then he was found not guilty and since 1939 he has been working again in the NKVD.

Ilyainen and Curzon are guilty of dishonest conduct of the investigation against Nikulin and Shvedov.

Similar to the case of Nikulin and Shvedov is the case on charges of espionage of Yefimov.

On November 29, 1942, the Red Army soldier Yefimov was summoned by the investigator of the Special Department for interrogation as a witness. During interrogation, Efimov told the investigator of the Special Department that he, Efimov, was captured by the Germans in 1941 and fled from there. This aroused suspicion and, in fact, was the basis for his detention. On November 30, Yefimov confessed to espionage during interrogation.

An analysis of the investigative materials showed that the investigation into the Efimov case was carried out extremely superficially and in bad faith. All

The accusations are built only on the confession of the defendant himself. Moreover, all these confessions are full of contradictions and implausibility.

The special department had every opportunity to check the identity of Efimov and collect more in-depth material about him. However, this was not done. The only objective evidence of Efimov's guilt is his surrender, being surrounded, captured in September 1941 and his stay in the territory occupied by the Germans. After Efimov returned from captivity and the Red Army liberated the territory where Efimov lived (Toropetsky district), he again, after checking him in the NKVD camps, was drafted into the Red Army, where he served for 8 months.

As a result of Efimov's categorical refusal at the meeting of the Military Tribunal on April 30, 1943, from his testimony and the absence of any other materials in the case that testify to his guilt, Efimov was acquitted.

To check the behavior of Efimov during his residence in the occupied territory, later liberated by the Red Army, the senior inspector of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, Colonel Comrade Dolin, and the senior investigator of the Main Directorate of Counterintelligence, Major Comrade Kovalenko, were sent to the Toropetsky District of the Kalinin Region. By checking on the spot (a number of people who knew Efimov were interviewed), they found that at the end of December 1941 Efimov came from German captivity (he was probably released home as a local native. - /B.S./), lived all the time with his father, he did not leave the village anywhere, during the time the Germans were in the area, he had no connection and communication with them, he did not conduct anti-Soviet agitation and did not betray any of the Soviet activists. Meanwhile, according to the materials of the investigation, the case was portrayed in such a way that Efimov, living in the Toropetsky district, was allegedly closely connected with the Germans, drank with them in a restaurant (I wonder where the fantasy of the counterintelligence officers placed this restaurant? Is it really in a remote Kalinin village that remained to also in the front line? / - B.S. /), gave the Germans the wife of political instructor Nikiforova Maria and led anti-Soviet agitation among the population.

Guilty of creating an unsubstantiated accusation of Efimov of espionage is the senior investigator of the Special Department of the Army, Captain Sedogin, and the head of the investigative unit, who is also the deputy head of the Special Department of the Army, Lieutenant Colonel Curzon.

After the case of Nikulin, Shvedov and the case of Efimov, the Military Tribunal of the 7th Army and its chairman Comrade Sevostyanov began to express doubts about the correctness of the investigation against a number of people who had already gone through the tribunal and were convicted by the tribunal for espionage. Thus, the Military Tribunal began to express doubts about the correctness of the investigative materials on charges of espionage of Pyshnov and Lyalin, Maslennikov and Nikitin, and Stafeyev. It is not possible to conduct a proper investigation into these cases, since the convicts (except for Lyalin) were shot.

As a result of the verification of all cases on other counter-revolutionary crimes cited in the memorandums of the Military Council and the military prosecutor of the army, it was established by the Special Departments of the Army, with

connivance of military prosecutors, perversions were indeed committed in the conduct of the investigation and violations of Soviet laws. For example:

The Red Army soldier Yakovlev, born in 1923, a member of the Komsomol, has served impeccably in the Red Army since November 1941. On April 25, 1942, together with two other fighters, he was summoned for interrogation as a witness to Comrade Nikolaev, authorized by the Special Department of the battalion. On the way to the Special Department, Yakovlev found a Finnish leaflet and immediately, at the end of the interrogation, handed it over to authorized Nikolaev. This was enough to arrest Yakovlev and start an investigation against him on charges of anti-Soviet agitation.

During the investigation, the following forgery was committed. When compiling the protocol of the search at Yakovlev's, on the instructions of the senior investigator of the Special Department of the Army, Captain Izotov, the leaflet was entered into the search protocol as being found during the search at Yakovlev's. The charge against Yakovlev is far-fetched from start to finish, and the Military Tribunal correctly acquitted Yakovlev.

Red Army soldier Gusev, born in 1922, a member of the Komsomol, was arrested in December 1942 by the Special Department of the 162nd fortified region for systematic anti-Soviet agitation and treasonous intentions. On March 6, 1943, the military tribunal of the army, after examining the case of Gusev, acquitted him. The inspection carried out established that Gusev made unhealthy, politically incorrect, sometimes bordering on anti-Soviet statements, which gave rise to the Special Department for his arrest. The investigation into the case was conducted in bad faith. The specific facts that took place in reality received a political generalization in the case file, which distorted the essence of the case. The testimonies of witnesses by detective Solovyov were clearly distorted.

Lieutenant Grigoryan, a member of the Komsomol, has been serving in the Red Army since 1939; on September 26, 1942, he was arrested by the Special Department of the 3rd Naval Brigade on charges of leaving the battlefield, voluntarily surrendering and expressing sabotage intentions. The verification established that Grigoryan was indeed in June 1941, that is, he ate in the first days of the war, being sent with seven fighters for reconnaissance, he came under heavy enemy fire, was confused and surrendered to the Germans. On the same day, 5-6 hours after being captured, he escaped from captivity. After recovering from a wound received during the flight from the Germans, Grigoryan served in the 110th Infantry Division, participated in the battles for Moscow, was wounded a second time and, upon leaving the hospital, continuously serves in parts of the 7th Separate Army. During this time, he repeatedly participated in battles, on his combat account he has more than two dozen killed Finns and is characterized as a strong-willed and courageous commander. There were no anti-Soviet and subversive statements and intentions on the part of Grigoryan, and these accusations are completely fictitious. The case was dismissed by the Military Tribunal, and Grigoryan was released 3 months after his arrest.

Guards foreman gunner-radio operator Fedortsev, a candidate member of the CPSU (b), has been serving in the army since 1937, from the first days of World War II he has been at the front. For actions in the Finnish campaign

He was awarded the Order of the Red Banner, for the Patriotic War he was awarded the Order of the Red Star. During the war he made 128

sorties and by the regiment commander is characterized as a brave fighter, ready at any moment to fulfill the task of the regiment commander. On August 6, 1942, Fedortsev was arrested by a special department of the 4th air base area on charges of anti-Soviet agitation.

The audit established that Fedortsev transmitted to other fighters the content of the fascist-White Guard program he listened to on the radio. Thus, there were grounds for Fedorovtsev's arrest, but, given his combat work in the fight against the Germans, the military prosecutor dismissed Fedortsev's case.

The facts set forth in the memorandum of the military prosecutor of the 7th Separate Army about bringing Kosmatykh, Lazarenko, Korolev, Goryachev to court without sufficient grounds also took place. All listed persons were acquitted by the court.

The fact that in some formations of the 7th Separate Army the attitude towards arrests is rather light is evidenced by the following facts. The special department of the 272nd rifle division during the first quarter of 1943, 15 people were arrested and they were charged with counter-revolutionary crimes. Of the 15 cases, 8 cases were terminated in the Special Department and 2 cases by the military prosecutor's office.

In the 4th Rifle Corps in the second half of 1942, 215 people were arrested for counter-revolutionary crimes. 43 people, or 20 percent of those arrested, were released due to lack of evidence. At the same time, it should be noted that the head of the Special Department of the 272nd Infantry Division, Major Bozhychko, at one of the meetings, said that he did not see anything wrong with these arrests and summoning witnesses, since the call of the Red Army soldiers to the Special Department is a kind of political work (the major preferred not to notice, that during such lessons of "political enlightenment" the hamstrings were shaking. - /B.S./).

The audit showed that the Special Departments in the methods of investigation allow perversions and violations of laws. In particular, the Special Departments used persons already convicted of espionage to the VMN (the highest measure of punishment. - / B. S. /) as chamber agents. So, in the case of the Red Army soldier Goryachev, who was accused of conducting anti-Soviet agitation, after the investigation did not collect sufficient materials for the prosecution, the spy Zheludkov, convicted on January 29, 1943, was invited as a witness. On February 8, 1943, this Zheludkov testified during interrogation that Goryachev, being with him in the cell, was conducting anti-Soviet agitation. It is characteristic that the investigator of the Special Department of the 4th air base area Vinogradov in the protocol of interrogation wrote about Zheludkov that he "we do not judge by words", i.e. Vinogradov committed an obvious forgery.

In the case of Maslennikov, who was convicted of espionage, the spy Karnyshev, who was sentenced to VMN, was involved as a chamber witness.

The fact that this kind of chamber witnesses were used in other cases is evidenced by the following fact. February 2, 1942

The Military Tribunal of the 114th Infantry Division for preparing a group transition to the side of the enemy condemned the Red Army soldiers Kucheryavy and Gushel to VMN .. The sentence was carried out two days later, on February 4, and on

in relation to Kucheryavy and Gushel, the sentence has not been carried out for several months. And when, at the beginning of May 1942, the Military Council of the Army began to wonder why these persons were not being executed, the head of the Special Department of the Army, Colonel Dobrovolsky, filed a petition with the Military Council of the Army to replace the VMN with imprisonment for exposing them to other persons.

In the practice of the work of the Special Department of the Army, there were facts when the defendants, before being sent to the court session, were summoned to the investigative unit to give instructions so that they showed in court what they showed during the investigation in the Special Department. This was confirmed by the senior investigator of the Special Department, Ilyainen, who admitted that, on Curzon's orders, the defendants were summoned to the investigation unit before the court and there they were instructed how to behave in court. Lieutenant Colonel Curzon at first denied these facts, then stated that perhaps there were such facts, but he was not aware of this, and then admitted that the defendants were summoned to the investigation unit, but allegedly for the purpose of instructing the convoy, although it is known that the briefing of the convoy is carried out by the head of the pre-trial detention cell.

In the practice of the work of the Special Department, there were facts of annoying and unnecessary presence of investigators of the Special Department of the Army at the court session. Given in the report of the commander of the 7th Separate Army, Major General Krutikov (the report, obviously, was received in April, since already at the end of this month Krutikov was awarded the rank of lieutenant general. - / B. S. /) the facts of the removal of senior investigator Ilyainen from the court at the hearing of the case of Shvedov and Nikulin and after that the clerk of the investigation department Karnachev was sent to court as an escort - corresponds to reality. This was done by order of the Deputy Chief of the Special Department of the Army, Lieutenant Colonel Curzon.

Lieutenant Colonel Curzon denies the fact of serving cigarettes to the defendants during breaks in the court session. The senior investigator of the Special Department, Nekrashevich, stated that once he treated the defendants to cigarettes. The secretary of the Military Tribunal, Zaitsev, claims that senior investigator Nekrashevich did this systematically and twice - Lieutenant Colonel Curzon.

The general conclusion that Shcherbakov came to in his report boiled down to the following: "Report to your (Stalin. - / B. S. /) name of the commander of the 7th Separate Army, Major General Krutikov, regarding the specific facts of perversions in the work Special Department of the Army - basically correct. As for the generalizations in the report, they are incorrect.

The audit showed that in a number of espionage cases, the accusations were based only on the confessions of the defendants themselves. However, the generalization made from the commander's report that a common feature of most espionage cases was the complete absence of objective evidence and that all accusations of espionage and sabotage were based on the confession of the defendants themselves is incorrect. The special department of the 7th Separate Army in general did

significant work to expose the German and Finnish agents, and to argue that all the accusations of espionage and sabotage were built only on the recognition of the defendants themselves is wrong.

The generalization made in the report of the commander of the 7th Separate Army that the investigating authorities are not taking measures to search for and arrest residents of foreign intelligence services is not accurate. So, out of 30 agents and residents who passed according to the testimony of the defendants in 1942-1943, 5 were found and sentenced to VMN (I wonder how many of them were like Nikulin? / -B.S. /).

Thus, an audit of the work of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army showed that there were major and serious shortcomings and distortions in the work of the Special Department of the Army and the Special Departments of formations, as well as perversions. The specific culprits are:

Deputy head of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army, he is also the head of the investigative unit - Lieutenant Colonel Curzon.

The senior investigator of the Special Department of the Army, Senior Lieutenant Ilyainen, is a Finn by nationality (obviously, in the opinion of the head of GlavPUR, nationality aggravated the investigator's guilt. - /B.S./).

Senior investigator of the Special Department of the Army, Captain Sedogin (at least with his nationality, everything was in order. - / B. S. /).

Investigator of the Special Department of the 162nd fortified area Captain Izotov.

Detective officer of the Special Department of the 162nd fortified area Solovyov.

At the same time, it was established that if the errors in the work of such people as Sedogin, Izotov, Solovyov, Nikolaev (killed) could be the result of inexperience and are really investigative errors, then the errors in the work of Curzon and Ilyainen are perversions dictated by careeristic considerations. I was particularly convinced of this by Curzon's dishonest behavior. In the case of Nikulin and Shvedov, Curzon told me that the investigator "let him down", that he interrogated Nikulin many times. Curzon at first said that the accused were not summoned for briefing to the investigative unit, then he said that they were summoned, but that the investigators did it without his knowledge, etc. Thus, Curzon lies and locks himself in trifles, and after that it is difficult to believe him and in more serious matters.

The head of the Special Department of the 7th Separate Army, Colonel Dobrovolsky, did not control the investigation well and entrusted too much to Curzon.

It should be noted that when investigating the materials of the Military Council of the Army, some employees of the Special Departments either denied the facts already established, or softened them in every possible way and smeared the witticism, adhering to the principle of "do not wash dirty linen in public." Even the head of the Special Department, Comrade Dobrovolsky, declared: "And why did Comrade Stalin have to be disturbed, they would have told me, everything would have been corrected and eliminated on the spot."

It should be noted another fundamental shortcoming in the work of the punitive bodies of the 7th Separate Army - this is the actual lack of prosecutorial supervision of the investigation by the military prosecutor

Colonel of Justice Gerasimov and his assistant Major of Justice Vasiliev. Gerasimov withdrew himself from supervision, blaming this activity on his assistant Vasiliev. Vasiliev, as well as the prosecutors of the formations, to a large extent stamped indictments without getting into the essence of the issue.

In the work of the Military Tribunals there was a reinsurance, a fear of taking full responsibility (for acquittal of persons suspected of espionage and other counter-revolutionary

crimes. - /B. C./) when considering cases. Evidence of this is the large number of unapproved sentences of the Military Tribunals by the commanders of the formations, the Military Council and the Military Collegium. So, for 1942-1943, out of 1529 sentences to CMN - 577 sentences, or 37 percent - CMN was replaced by imprisonment. In many cases, these changes were the result of the actual pardon of the convicts, but in a number of cases these changes were the result of disagreement on the merits of the case. Among the employees of the Special Departments (now "SMERSH") there are many inexperienced, semi-literate people. This shortcoming should be corrected by the transfer of several thousand political workers to counterintelligence agencies.

In conclusion, Shcherbakov proposed a draft order, which Stalin issued in his own name, having previously made some adjustments to the text. The head of GlavPUR believed that Sedogin, Izotov and Solovyov should be sent to the army as a punishment. Iosif Vissarionovich replaced the active army with a penal battalion under the Chief of Logistics of the Red Army. After all, former investigators of the Special Departments were considered carriers of top secret information and at the front they could be captured or, even worse, run over to the enemy. For the same reason, Curzon and Ilyainen were sent not to a penal battalion, but to the Gulag. As part of the rear penal battalion, the convicted special officers most likely had to do such dangerous work as clearing minefields and dismantling the rubble formed after the bombing.

Iosif Vissarionovich also did not approve the proposal to transfer Dobrovolsky and Gerasimov to another Army, but he issued them not just a reprimand, but a reprimand with a warning. The punishment for Major Vasiliev was also toughened. Stalin decided to reduce him not only in position, as Shcherbakov suggested, but also in rank.

It is striking that for the outrages that were happening in the Special Departments of the 7th Separate Army, only people who held secondary positions, in essence, switchmen, were punished. The chief commanders, Dobrovolsky and Gerasimov, got off, in fact, with a slight fright. The chairman of the army tribunal Savostyanov, who obediently stamped hundreds of dubious sentences, was not mentioned at all in the text of the order. But he acquitted the Red Army soldier Efimov and expressed doubt about the proof of the charges in several previously considered espionage cases only after the army commander, General Krutikov, sent a report to Stalin about the irregularities in the work of the Special Departments. Otherwise, Sevostyanov, together with the Special Department, would have continued to doom innocent people to death.

But Stalin did not care much about judicial instances and legal norms. It is no coincidence that in the order of May 31, 1943, the verdict

Curzon and Ilyayinen was directly a foregone conclusion. A special meeting was expressly ordered to condemn them to five years in the camps, even before any consideration of the case. Stalin and Shcherbakov decided to make people with foreign surnames the main culprits of what happened (perhaps they suspected Lieutenant Colonel Curzon of being related to the famous Lord Curzon?). This was no accident either. It was during the years of the Great Patriotic War, and especially after the Stalingrad victory, that the foundations of the future company to combat

"cosmopolitanism". On August 17, 1942, the same Shcherbakov received a note from the head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks G.F. Alexandrov, where he expressed concern that "in the departments of the Committee for Arts, non-Russian people (mainly Jews) turned out to be at the head of Russian art institutions ... In the Bolshoi Theater of the USSR, which is the center of the great Russian musical culture, the leadership is entirely non-Russian. .. The same picture is in the Moscow State Conservatory, where the director is Goldenweiser, and his deputy is Stolyarov (a Jew). All the main departments of the conservatory are headed by Jews... It is no coincidence that in conservatories students are not instilled with a love for Russian music, Russian folk song and most of our well-known musicians and vocalists (Oistrakh, E. Gilels, Flier, L. Gilels, Ginzburg, Fikhtengolts, Pantofel Nechetskaya) have in their repertoire mainly works by Western European composers. Georgy Fedorovich proposed "to develop measures for the training and promotion of Russian cadres" and "to carry out now a partial renewal of leading cadres in a number of art institutions." As part of this renewal, on November 19, the day the Soviet counter-offensive at Stalingrad began, the leadership of the Moscow Conservatory was replaced. "Cosmopolitan" Goldenweiser was replaced by "Slav" Shebalin. And on October 24, Shcherbakov received a proposal from the chairman of the Committee for Cinematography I.G. Bolshakov not to approve the role of "Russian Princess Efrosinya" in Sergei Eisenstein's film "Ivan the Terrible" actress Faina Ranevskaya, since "Ranevskaya's Semitic features are especially pronounced, especially in close-ups." And they didn't approve! True, ironically, they replaced Ranevskaya with an actress who also did not differ in "racial purity" - Serafima Birman. In July 1943, D.I. Ortenberg, whom Shcherbakov had reprimanded a few months earlier for having "too many Jews" in the editorial office, and demanded that their number be reduced immediately. Even friendship with Mekhlis did not save David Iosifovich.

Therefore, it is not surprising that "scapegoats" were made of Curzon and Ilyayinen. This fit perfectly into the framework approved by Stalin
politicians.

Stalin's order did not say anything about the specific methods of conducting an investigation practiced by SMERSH. He and Shcherbakov knew perfectly well that Abakumov's people simply did not know how to work by other methods. The head of GlavPUR also perfectly understood that, in fact, Commander Krutikov was absolutely right in his generalizations, but he firmly adhered to the old party principle - one cannot generalize "atypical phenomena", but, more simply, those that went against the Marxist-Leninist theory and the views of Stalin. If we admit that the counterintelligence organs of the 7th Army since the beginning of the war have not

caught not a single spy, you will either have to eliminate or radically change the entire system of counterintelligence agencies, which itself is flesh and blood from the blood of the Soviet party-state system. And the attempt on the foundations of Alexander

Sergeevich, they could let me in with Joseph Vissarionovich. On the contrary, Abakumov, who from the very beginning of the war led such an inglorious work of the Special Departments, for some time became one of Stalin's favorites and after the war headed the Ministry of State Security.

If you carefully analyze Shcherbakov's report, you inevitably come to the conclusion that General Krutikov was right in his conclusion that the vast majority of espionage cases were falsified by the Special Departments of the Army. If at least in some of these cases there were objective evidence of the guilt of the convicts, and not just their own confessions, the head of GlavPUR would not fail to cite them in his report. What could serve as evidence of espionage and sabotage activities? These are, first of all, radio stations, encryption notebooks, records containing intelligence information, as well as explosives. Although, as was the case with Nikulin, the explosives could be intended to silence fish, and not to undermine bridges. It is no coincidence that Curzon and Ilyainen so seized on the trophy pistol found at Shvedov - it became possible at least in this way to connect him and Nikulin with German intelligence. At worst, enemy reconnaissance groups can be delayed when trying to cross the front line. But there are no facts of this kind in Shcherbakov's report either. Obviously, the vast majority of espionage cases in the 7th Army were fabricated in exactly the same way as the cases of Shvedov, Nikulin, Efimov and Maslennikov. Only it was no longer possible to verify the validity of the charges - the defendants had time to be shot.

The method, when those sentenced to death were planted as "hens" to those under investigation, from whom it was necessary to obtain confessions, of course, is not an invention of the special officers of the 7th Separate Army and even the NKVD as a whole. He is as old as the world. If anyone watched the brilliant film by the Hungarian director Miklós Jancsó "The Robbers" (in the Soviet box office - "Without Hope"), then he probably remembered his plot. The action takes place shortly after the suppression of the Hungarian revolution of 1848-1849. The police commissioner exposes the killer of four and sends him to a camp where people are kept suspected of criminal and political crimes. The murderer is promised a pardon if he finds at least one criminal who killed more than four people. It is clear that the one who is condemned to death will be ready to slander anyone, hoping that the "tower" will be replaced by a prison.

This method can only be applied under totalitarian and dictatorial regimes, when there is no independent judiciary. And during the purges of 1937-1938, slander was widely practiced by some defendants who had already confessed to execution crimes, others who were still at large or, being arrested, refused to admit their guilt. Often, those sentenced to death were put in cells with those arrested in order to provoke the latter to cooperate with the investigation. Surely such methods were used during the war by Chekists not only of the 7th Army, but also of other armies and fronts. people there

were basically the same - from the lower stratum of the participants in the "Great Terror".

In 1943, the investigators of the Special Section, before the meeting of the Military Tribunal, inspired their defendants that they should in no case renounce the previously given testimony, otherwise it would be worse. And then they watched their behavior in the courtroom. In the same way, in 1937, the investigators in the Tukhachevsky case talked with their clients before the meeting of the Special Judicial Presence, and then sat with the defendants in the courtroom. And the treat with cigarettes is an old trick. For one of Tukhachevsky's closest friends, Boris Mironovich Feldman, investigator 3.M. Ushakov did not regret not only cigarettes, but also fresh apples, if only he would not refuse the slander of himself and his comrades.

Someone may object that things were so bad only in the Special Departments of the 7th Separate Army, and on other fronts the Smershevites were at their best. However, there are no objective data to support such a conclusion. Why all of a sudden it was in Karelia that the worst cadres of investigators and detectives should have gathered? They could not have been specially selected there according to this principle. The only serious difference was that in the sector of the 7th Separate Army (and it acted as a front), there had been no active hostilities since the end of the 41st year. Therefore, in a relatively calm environment, it was possible to organize a more or less thorough objective check of the work of the Special Departments here. On other fronts, fighting was almost continuous, the front line was constantly changing, so keeping track of the special officers, and even more so organizing a comprehensive check of investigative cases, was much more difficult. We have no reason to think that in the Special Departments of the Voronezh or Western Fronts, in the Separate Primorsky Army or on the Leningrad Front, there was less bullshit than in the 7th Separate Army.

Perhaps it was this army that fell into the order of the People's Commissar of Defense because its commander turned out to be one of the few generals who dared to openly protest against the arbitrariness of the almighty SMERSH. Alexey Nikolaevich Krutikov was a very educated person. Even before the war, he managed to complete the Shot command courses, the Frunze Military Academy and the General Staff Academy. Krutikov, his former boss, Marshal Meretskov, called "to the marrow of his bones a military man", who "proved in practice that he can handle not only staff, but also large command positions." And S.M. Shtemenko, in connection with the arrival of Alexei Nikolayevich in September 44 to the post of chief of staff of the Karelian Front, described him as a person "energetic and better prepared in all respects" than General B.A., who previously held this post. Pigarevich. Meretskov, who commanded the front, noted the skillful organization of staff work by Krutikov.

I will add that the conflict with SMERSH did not affect Krutikov's career and fate in any way. He ended World War II as Chief of Staff of the 1st Far Eastern Front, was awarded the Order of Lenin, two Orders of the Red Banner, two Orders of Suvorov 1st Class and the Order of the Red Star. Alexei Nikolaevich died quietly in 1949, at the age of 54, while working in the central office of the Ministry of the Armed Forces. Abakumov was by no means as omnipotent as many thought.

Aleksei Nikolaevich Krutikov is one of the few characters in this book (not counting, of course, the countless victims of arbitrariness) who arouses my most sincere sympathy. This means that even then, even being in very high positions, it was possible to remain human and help people as much as possible, at least slightly reducing the number of victims, not necessarily paying for kindness with your own life. Thank God that General Krutikov survived that harsh time.

One gets the impression that the counterintelligence agencies had a kind of order on how many spies, saboteurs, deserters and persons guilty of anti-Soviet agitation they had to catch in a month and a quarter. So they shot, sent to camps or to penal battalions those who came to hand, primarily from among those who lived in the occupied territory or were captured. Those arrested were forced by all means to confess to real or imaginary crimes, so that later they could stamp a guilty verdict in the tribunal and not bother themselves with other evidence. From Shcherbakov's report, we can conclude that in 1942 and the first quarter of 1943 alone, 952 people were shot by the verdicts of the Military Tribunals of the 7th Separate Army. In total, during the Great Patriotic War, more than 225 thousand death sentences were passed in the Red Army. It's scary to think how many innocent people were among them.

SERGO BERIA IS A PLAGIATOR?

Statement by G.M. Malenkov from the former chief designer of systems for radio-controlled projectiles KB-1
G.V. Koreneva

001760ss/op - 1

Refundable

Owls. Secret (Special Folder)

To the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Comrade Malenkov
G.M.

From Korenev Georgy Vasilyevich, Moscow, Potapovsky lane, 9/4, apt. 98. Phone K-7-88-16.

Statement

Not knowing the jurisdiction of the case of S. Beria (son of Lavrenty Beria Sergo.

- /B.S./), I appeal to you with a request to restore my copyright infringed by the activities of S. Beria.

S. Beria plagiarized two kinds of me.

First, he used my scientific work in his graduation project, Ph.D. and doctoral dissertations, while forbidding me to pursue academic degrees. The circumstances of this plagiarism are detailed in the protocol of my interrogation at the Prosecutor's Office of the USSR.

Secondly, he used my ingenuity and initiative, as a former chief designer of projectile aircraft radio control systems, in his activities at KB-1, forbidding me to come up with my proposals.

I had to report all my proposals to him, and he put them into action on his own behalf.

The circumstances of this are set out in my report addressed to Comrade Khrushchev, which is currently with Comrade Khrunichev.

Therefore, I ask you to restore my copyrights to the following works:

1. For the general and aviation part of S. Beria's diploma project (a projectile with a turbojet engine and a swept wing, weight, altitude, range, speed, trajectory, i.e. the main tactical parameters of the Comet system)[15]
2. Together with N.S., Koshlyakov (kinematics in three dimensions) and P.O. Voronov (the theory of guidance equipment) - for the Ph.D. thesis of S. Beria.
3. Together with P.O. Voronov (the theory of homing equipment) - for the doctoral dissertation of S. Beria.
4. On the dynamics of the "Kometa" system developed by me (vol. P-UP of the technical project).
5. On the theory of dispersion of guided projectiles developed by me and for the first time in the Union applied to the "Kometa" system (so-called UE of the technical project).
- b. On the methodology developed by me and for the first time in the Union applied in practice to the "Kometa" system for studying the dynamics of guided projectiles using mass calculations (vol. III of the technical project). This technique will acquire particular significance when we finally have powerful electronic type computers in the Union.
7. For my use in 1939-1940. the Heaviside method (operator, frequency method) and the study of aircraft motion. Two unpublished (because of secrecy) articles have survived. Witnesses: Academician A.I. Nekrasov, Professor Yu.B. and Golubchikov S.P. The operator method is now widely (and, unfortunately, incorrectly) used in KB-1.
8. On the system of a guided aircraft projectile, in combination with the aircraft carrier DB-3 (Ilyushin), developed by me in 1941-1943, at first together with S.P. Korolev (now chief designer of long-range missiles) and L.S. Theremin, and since the end of 1941 independently. The project is available in [At the Special Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR. Stocks, stamps, fixtures, drawings and the entire backlog were destroyed. G.Ya. Kutepov during the return of Plant No. 288 from Omsk to Moscow in 1943. In 1946-47, I used the materials on this system that I had left at that time when working on the topic that served as the basis for the Comet system.

9. On the system of combating surface ships by using projectiles dropped from a carrier aircraft and directed using an infrared beam. This work was done by me as the chief designer, my employees and cooperative enterprises from 1934 to 1937. TB-3 (Tupolev) was used as a carrier aircraft. In 1936, in the torpedo version (without a beam, which was delayed in development at the Central Radio Laboratory in Leningrad), the system successfully passed comprehensive tests in the presence of a special commission of the Revolutionary Military Council. Based on the test results, the Government decided to launch an experimental series in 1937. My experience in developing a system and conducting complex tests was used by S. Beria without indicating my

role in this matter, and vice versa with a cunningly conceived and deftly executed increasing rubbing of me from work.

10. On a special form of the parallel approach method, which formed the basis of the initial technical design of the Berkut system (project of an anti-aircraft missile. - /B.S./) (see t. Guy P of the technical design of the system; reports KB-1 No. 961 /306, 961/308, 961/311, 961/327 - September - October 1950). The application of this method brought out the impasse in the design of the Berkut system, which then turned out due to the lack of a suitable guidance method.

11. To the general parametric guidance method, a special case of which was applied in the implemented Berkut system (see the technical design of the second version of the system, report addressed to S. Beria on 002658 dated March 2, 1951, file 0269, p. 4, report KB-1, Inventory No. 961/442, March 1951).

12. On the so-called "C" method (in collaboration with others) - a guidance method that is a special case of my general parametric method and is especially convenient for building a radar (B-200 station). This method gave enormous savings in comparison with the method of parallel approach proposed by me. It can be said without exaggeration that only the use of these methods made it possible to implement the Berkut system.

The plagiarism of S. Beria on the indicated points and the cunning provocative activity of G.Ya. Kutepova, his accomplice, which aimed to hide the systematic plagiarism of S. Beria, inflicted very serious moral and material damage on me, in fact depriving me of the opportunity to engage in active creative design work in the specialty in which I am a pioneer and to which I devoted more than 20 years of my life.

I ask for your guidance to eliminate this injustice.

In addition, I ask you to acknowledge my copyright for the following works performed by me:

1. Radio-controlled aircraft TB-1, implemented according to my ideas and under my leadership in 1933 (twenty years ago).

I was awarded the Order of Lenin for this work (Decree of November 6, 1933). Starting from 1935, an experimental squadron was created

such aircraft in Yam-Edrovo. This work appears to give priority to the Soviet Union in controlling heavy aircraft by radio.

2. A new way of moving on the earth's surface, especially suitable for guided ground projectiles. The tactical idea is that such crawling projectiles are used by advancing infantry to suppress knots of resistance. The moving model was built and tested in Omsk in 1942. In the cases [The Special Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs should have an act of successful testing of the model. The work was stopped by Kutepov, it is not known why. I have not preserved the materials, but the theory of movement and drawings can be easily restored by me.

3. Twin-engine attack aircraft designed to fight light cruisers and destroyers. The main armament is a 6-inch tank gun (it seems that the hona was then called B-13) and rockets.

The work was done in 1945-46. The materials, drawings and proposals were handed over to [U Special Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR.

At present, despite the very difficult situation for me, I continue to search for solutions to problems that will become relevant in the near future - the problems of combating supersonic aircraft and long-range missiles, which, as you know, were not included in the assignment for the development of the Berkut system and against which it therefore does not protect us.

In this direction, I managed to do the following:

1. Found a new method of anti-aircraft projectile control. A theory of this method has been worked out, as far as one can do.
2. A new type of guided projectile design has been found in two versions, one of which was conceived specifically for the new control method.

Of course, these issues have been resolved only in principle. By the way, from my research follows the paradoxical fact that now we can already talk about the fight against heavy long-range artillery shells already fired from the gun. Of course, this is not an easy task, but the possibility of solving it is theoretically substantiated.

I ask you, Georgy Maksimilianovich, in addition to resolving the issue of copyright, to provide an opportunity to continue my unfairly interrupted creative design work in the field of guided missiles and unmanned aircraft. Korenev. 27. HT. 1953

No. 00387 ss/op

Sent out:

Tov. Malenkov G.M.,

Tov. Molotov V.M.,

Tov. Khrushcheyuva N.S.,

Tov. Voroshilov K.E.,

Tov. Kaganovich L.M.

copy sent

Tov. Rudenko R.A.

(RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1448, l. 29-33).

Beria was one of the fathers of the Soviet military-industrial complex. The nuclear missile race that unfolded with his active participation after the Second World War, and then the conventional arms race, ultimately led the Soviet economy to sad results and largely contributed to the collapse of the USSR.

SOVIET ECONOMY: TRUTH AND MYTH [16]

We are so accustomed to the statement that the USSR in terms of total production ranks second in the world after the United States, repeated in the recently published reference book "USSR in Figures in 1987", [17] that we have not thought about what is behind this for a long time. After all, the gap in the level and quality of life with the same United States is colossal, this will be confirmed by any citizen of our country who has been there, and dry statistical calculations will confirm that only in per capita meat consumption we lag behind the United States by 3 (!) times. [18]

I will not reveal any secret by saying that our economy still retains strict centralized planning, even if it is now called "state order". If you do not fulfill the plan, then you will be left without a bonus, which has already become an indispensable and significant part of the salary, and now, with the introduction of state acceptance, sometimes without a salary at all, if the company's products are rejected. Planned indicators lowered from above very often do not take into account the real possibilities of enterprises and farms. But the control figures are the law. And in order to fulfill them, managers have to go for postscripts - a deliberate overestimation of information about the goods and services produced. The temptation to "fulfill" and even "overfulfill" the plan with one stroke of the pen is too great. There are other additions, so to speak, absolutely legal - the maximum increase in the cost of production, for which the most expensive raw materials, materials and equipment are used, and the number of intermediate operations performed each time at a separate enterprise increases dramatically. All this leads to a significant increase in the gross value of products due to double, triple, quadruple counting, but without any increase in the physical volume of manufactured products or improvement in their consumer properties.

But there are also "material annotations" that you can literally feel with your hand, but the trouble is that they do not affect the standard of living of the population or, say, the country's defense capability, since they do not have consumer properties and, therefore,

are not values in the political-economic sense of the word.

These are tractors and harvesters rusting in the open air due to the lack of the necessary hanging equipment. These are machines that are obsolete before they are going to be installed, and doomed to become at best scrap for the steel industry, and at worst, simply crumble with rust. This is steel, in terms of smelting and imports of which we have long been firmly holding the first place in the world. These are shoes and clothes that are destined to rot in warehouses. These are construction projects that drag on for decades, only to be mothballed later. This, finally, services for the repair of household electrical appliances and electronics, which have become our daily concern due to the extremely low quality of domestic refrigerators and tape recorders, televisions and players. In terms of the volume of such services, we also clearly occupy the world's leading

position.

It is clear that all the above circumstances greatly distort the Soviet statistics of cost indicators - national income and gross national product (GNP). In the statistics of countries with a market economy - both developing and developed capitalist ones - there is no such distortion, since there are no phenomena that generate it - postscripts and products produced, but not sold on the market. The appearance of such products in a market economy is the beginning of a crisis of overproduction.

One more phenomenon that affects our well-being should be mentioned. We will talk about the so-called "shadow economy". In the West, its role is extremely great. This is all goods and services that are hidden from the tax authorities and are produced either on official

registered enterprises or clandestine factories. It is known, for example, that when in 1987 in Italy official statistics included goods and services of the shadow economy in the country's GNP, in per capita terms Italy caught up with Japan in this indicator, from which back in 1983 it lagged behind 1.6 times. [19]

Sometimes in the West the scale of the Soviet shadow economy is considered just as significant. So, the American scientist V.G. Trembl believes that in the USSR the production of this sector is about 30% of the official GNP. [20]

Only one thing can be said about this - if this were actually the case, then it would not be so bad. At least there would not be such a huge shortage of consumer goods and services. Indeed, in the West, the "shadow economy" produces mainly what is in high demand among the population. Yes, if we also take the official GNP, the State Statistics Committee! After all, our national income, according to the already mentioned statistical guide, reaches almost two-thirds of the American one. If we also had "left" products reaching almost a third of the official GNP, then our GNP would generally be equal to the US GNP. Everyone would be dressed and shod in the latest fashion and served in the highest class, no worse than in America.

Only how far we are in reality from such a rosy picture! And the "shadow economy" is no help here. Because in the USSR it has a pronounced parasitic character and adds almost nothing to the social pie. Its dealers profit from postscripts, bribes, deficit speculation, drug trafficking.

They (with the exception of "guild workers") practically do not create new values.

I would also note a huge gap in the quality of the vast majority of goods produced in the USSR and in the West. It is known, for example, that Soviet "Zhigulis" for freely convertible currency are sold several times cheaper than Japanese "Coyotes" and Italian "Fiats", and if anyone buys a "Volga" in the West, then at a price close to

to the value of scrap metal.

All these considerations made me doubt the official data of the State Statistics Committee and try to independently compare the main economic indicators of the USSR and the USA. Comparison of these two countries is a long tradition in our economic science. After all, they are close in terms of population (the population of the USSR in 1983 was only 1.16 times the population of the United States), and their territories are vast, and the economy has an extremely diversified, diversified structure, and climatic conditions are similar.

In principle, the national income in the GNP of the USSR and the USA can be compared in two ways: either to calculate American indicators according to Soviet norms and prices in rubles, or Soviet ones - according to American ones in dollars. The first method has to be rejected, since there are no postscripts or imaginary values in the American economy, it would never occur to anyone to increase the cost of products with the help of postscripts (since this will only cause an increase in the amount of tax), and therefore it is simply impossible to adequately recalculate the US national income in rubles. It remains to the second method Recalculation on it

automatically excludes all postscripts and shams from Soviet indicators. Only the "shadow economy" remains outside the calculations (in the United States, it is largely formed due to the phenomenon, the opposite of postscripts - the concealment of manufactured products from taxation). But as was shown above, the American "shadow economy" significantly exceeds the Soviet "shadow economy" in terms of output. Therefore, my calculation may somewhat overestimate the true ratio of indicators in favor of the USSR, but certainly not in favor of the United States.

A group of researchers from the Institute for the USA and Canada of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR compared the national incomes of the USA and the USSR. His results are published in the newspaper Argumenty ni Fakty (1988, No. 47, p. 2), and I used them. In the 1980s, the share of wages in the US national income was stable, remaining at the level of 60%. Wages make up about 90% of the personal income of the US population, so the share of personal income in national income is about 66%. In the USSR in 1985, the share of wages in national income was 37% (in our country wages are practically equal to all personal incomes of citizens). The rest - 34% of the national income of the United States and 63% of the USSR (what remains after subtracting the share of personal consumption), is the accumulation (capital investment and production of capital goods) that is necessary to ensure this level of personal consumption, and military spending states. There is no need to prove that defense spending is only an additional burden for the national economy, since neither the army nor the military industry creates any material wealth.

In the United States, according to scientists from the Stockholm Institute for

International Peace Research (SIPRI), American military spending in the 1980s averaged about 7% of GNP, or, given that in the United States, national income is about 89% of GNP, about 8% of national income. [21]

The remaining part of the American national income - approximately 26% - is precisely the accumulation (you can call it conditionally net, i.e. cleared of military spending), which is necessary to maintain the current level of personal consumption in the USA - about 66% of the national income. Assuming that in the USSR the ratio between personal consumption and conditionally net accumulation is approximately the same as in the USA, I approximately determined the share of conditional net accumulation in the Soviet national income - about 15%. A considerable part of the national income falls on the military expenditures of the USSR. In the GNP, their share will be somewhat lower - 42%, if we accept for the USSR the ratio between national income and GNP that exists in the USA.

Now we finally have the opportunity to equate the Soviet and American indicators to each other. After all, military parity between the USSR and the USA as a whole is an indisputable thing, at least since the 70s, so the military spending of the two countries can be considered approximately equivalent. The entire Soviet GNP is only about 16% of the American one (on a per capita basis, about 14%). With this in mind, you can see what place our country occupies in the world in terms of GNP (both in terms of total volume and in terms of per capita).

A group of American researchers compared most countries and territories of the world in terms of per capita GNP. Calculations were made in conditional dollars, taking into account the different purchasing power of various national currencies in relation to 1983. [22]

The US per capita GNP was set at \$14,120. This means that the per capita GNP of the USSR will be approximately \$19,775. This puts our country in 53rd place in a group of 135 countries and territories, behind South Korea (2010 dollars) and ahead of Brazil (1880 dollars). As is clear from the data published in the United Nations Statistical Yearbook for 1983-1984, a similar situation is observed in other socio-economic indicators. Thus, in terms of average life expectancy, the USSR ranks from 47th to 56th among 156 countries, in terms of infant mortality - 90th out of 200, in terms of telephone penetration (the number of telephones per 1,000 inhabitants) - 66th out of 147, and in terms of the number of cars per capita - 74th place among 139 countries and territories (according to this last indicator, we are 13 times behind the USA!).

The number of passenger cars per capita reflects, strictly speaking, the standard of living of the population, rather than general economic indicators. The standard of living in the USSR is relatively worse than it could be, based on the level of GNP per capita, since our country is forced to bear the exorbitant burden of military spending. If we subtract from our GNP "excessive" military expenditures in excess of the 7% level compared to the American and world norm (in the vast majority of states they are below the level of 7% of GNP), then the size of such a "cleaned" GNP will be equal to 1285 dollars and in to a greater extent reflect the position of our country in the world hierarchy according to

the standard of living of the population.

According to this indicator, the USSR falls into the same group of countries with the Congo (\$1,230), Turkey (\$1,240), Tunisia (\$1,290), Jamaica (\$1,300) and the Dominican Republic (\$1,370). So, both in terms of per capita GNP and in terms of living standards, the Soviet Union has to be included in the group of developing countries. Therefore, all the claims of some leaders of these countries about the allegedly insufficient assistance of the USSR to the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in comparison with the assistance provided by the developed capitalist countries can hardly be considered substantiated.

My calculations are fully confirmed by the data given by the famous Soviet economist G. Khanin. He tried to clean our economic indicators from the influence of inflation and determined that for 1928-1987. the national income of the USSR increased 6.9 times (according to the calculations of the State Statistics Committee - 89.5 times), while over the same period the national income of the United States increased 6.1 times, Great Britain - 3.8 times and France - 4.6 times times. Meanwhile, in 1893, the industrial production of the USA, Great Britain, France and Tsarist Russia was correlated as 5.0:2.2:1.5:1.0. By 1913, there was no significant change in the ratio of the main economic indicators of Russia and the leading industrial powers of the world. In 1928, the USSR in terms of the main economic indicators, including the total national income, approximately reached the level of 1913. The ratio of the national incomes of the USA, Great Britain, France and

The USSR in 1928 was approximately equal to 7:2, 2:1.4:1 (I repeat that, ideally, the ratio of two or more countries in terms of GNP, national income and industrial production will be the same). This means that in 1987 this ratio was 6.2:1 between the USA and the USSR, 0.9:1 between Great Britain and the USSR, and 1:1 between France and the USSR. According to my calculations, in 1983 the GNP of the USA and the USSR were related as 6.2:1, while those of France, Great Britain and the USSR were practically equal to each other. As you can see, the results are almost identical.

The USSR in terms of total GNP ranks fifth in the world, behind the United States, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany and (very slightly) France. In sixth place is the United Kingdom, which almost catches up with us, and then Italy and Canada. The situation is almost the same as in tsarist Russia in 1913, only Japan has taken the place of Great Britain ahead of us.

My estimate is almost 4 times lower than the official one given in the reference book "USSR in Figures in 1987", which states that the national income of the USSR in 1987 was 64% of the national income of the United States. This means that the postscripts and the "imaginary" cost distort our statistical data by about the same number of times, overestimate them. With this in mind, we must also assess the relative size of our annual budget deficit. As shown by E. Gaidar and O. Latsis, the nat deficit is about 11% of the GNP, and the official GNP, not cleared of distortions. But since the official GNP is overestimated, in my opinion, by about 4 times, in reality the deficit reaches 44-45% of GNP. Critical world economic science considers a budget deficit of 8-10% of GNP. Then galloping, uncontrollable inflation begins. The enormous size of the Soviet budget deficit clearly indicates that in the event that market pricing is introduced into the economy on any significant scale, we will face a real

inflationary catastrophe (growth in prices by 1000 percent or more per year) with unpredictable social, economic and political consequences. Cooperative prices today are sometimes ten times higher than state prices, showing what potential inflation can be in our country.

A realistic view of the true place of our country in the world economic hierarchy dictates urgent measures. An immediate rejection of centralized mandatory planning and a transition to a predominantly market-based regulation is impossible due to the above reason. The only way out today is a sharp and unilateral (!) reduction in military spending, the fastest conversion (transfer to peaceful purposes) of the main part of the military industry and research and development. Military spending should provide us with the possibility of guaranteed destruction of the enemy in the event of a retaliatory nuclear strike. At the same time, transfer most of our enterprises to a joint-stock basis, which will make it possible to mobilize funds from the population, as well as investments from abroad, for development needs. Small private ownership in the service sector and in small industrial enterprises should be allowed, which will make it possible to streamline the current individual labor and cooperative sectors.

In agriculture, under certain conditions, it is worth allowing private ownership of land, and the initial allotment

should go for a purely nominal fee. This will make the peasant a true master of the land. Lease, even unlimited, will not give such a feeling and responsibility for the land. Recall that we already had an indefinite lease, but it lasted only 11 years - from 1918 to 1929. Such an experience will alarm anyone. So today's tenant will first of all strive to get the maximum possible income from the land in the shortest possible time, which will inevitably lead to soil depletion and deterioration of the already difficult environmental situation in the country. In addition, tenants are now firmly tied to collective farms, state farms and local Soviet bodies, which in practice are able to dictate their terms to them.

One should not think that the transfer of land into private hands will liquidate the collective farms. This process is slow, for decades (as well as shareholderization); viable collective farms will undoubtedly remain. In addition, few peasants today will agree to take the land into private ownership. Yes, and the peasants who have taken the land will inevitably unite in various kinds of cooperatives (this is also evidenced by the experience of Western countries). The fact that the processes will be extended over time guarantees us against violent inflation, and the conversion of the military industry will smooth out both the budget and trade deficits. Of course, changes in the economy will be positive and irreversible only if political life is fully and consistently democratized. Only then will we be able to reach the level of industrialized countries in a few decades (but not in 5-10 years, as some people think).

R. 5.: At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, in connection with the collapse of Enron and a number of other American companies involved in computer and other high technologies, we can talk about the emergence of a new type of imaginary value already in the pure form of a market economy. In this case, however, companies do not overestimate total output, but

only the amount of profit in order to artificially increase the value of their shares and thus attract capital. This is unlikely to affect the size of the GNP in any significant way, but it probably distorts its structure.

Note: 1. In all reference books of S.S. Mamulov is listed as a lieutenant general. But R.I. Pimenov, citing the date of promotion of his cellmate to lieutenant general, stubbornly calls him, in his own words, colonel general. It is possible that this title was awarded to Mamulov in the first weeks after Stalin's death, when Beria appointed him head of the secretariat of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. On April 10, 1953, Mamulov received a new appointment - head. department of party, Komsomol personnel and a member of the Bureau of the Communist Party of Georgia. Probably, Beria was preparing him for the post of leader of the Georgian communists, but the fall of Lavrenty Pavlovich led Mamulov not to the highest party post in Georgia, but to the Vladimir prison. 2. This refers to Major General Varlam Alekseevich Kakuchaya, who was appointed Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia on March 16, 1953, but on April 10 he was transferred to the post of head of counterintelligence

Transcaucasian Military District; it is possible that his departure was caused, among other things, by this anonymous letter. But it is possible that the reason here was deeper. Beria planned to put Georgia under his special control, and in connection with this he decided to appoint V.G. Dekanozov, besides, not a Mingrelian, like Kakuchai, but a Georgian of Ossetian origin, a native of Baku. This movement saved Kakuchaya's life - he was given only 15 years, but it killed Dekanozov, who was shot along with Beria.

3. Shalva Otarovich Tsereteli - arrested in 1953 after the fall of Beria, and shot in 1955; he was not a kulak, but a prince, and relatively young - born in 1894.

4. Nikolai Mikhailovich Rukhadze, Minister of State Security of Georgia in 1948-1952, removed from his post and arrested for insufficient activity in defeating the Mingrelian group; this was done with the participation of Beria, because after the arrest, Rukhadze was accused of collecting dirt on Lavrenty Pavlovich.

5. Statement by the doctor of the Kremlin hospital L.F. Timashshuk that Zhdanov could not be diagnosed with a heart attack, confusing it with cardiac asthma, which led to his death a day after Abakumov handed her statement to Stalin. This statement has been fully confirmed. March 27, 1953, 4 days before his release, Professor V.N. Vinogradov confirmed in a note addressed to Beria: "It is nevertheless necessary to admit that A.A. Zhdanov had a heart attack, and the denial of it by me, professors Vasilenko, Egorov, doctors Mayorov and Karpag was a mistake on our part. We didn't have a diagnosis or treatment."

6. Speaking at the July plenum, the secretary of the Lvov Regional Committee Z.T. Serdyuk argued that these figures were exaggerated and that, in turn, only on the territory of the Lviv region, Ukrainian nationalists destroyed about 30 thousand military personnel, employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of State Security and Soviet activists.

7. In fairness, I emphasize that in 1944-1945 Lavrenty Pavlovich himself, the then head of the NKVD, was directly involved in these repressions. The figure of 153 thousand killed is most likely greatly exaggerated. It is probably taken from military reports, in which the number of killed insurgents was most often a figment of the imagination of the commanders. It is also undoubted that many of those killed were civilians who had no direct relation to the UPA.

8. An agent of the NKVD-MGB with many years of experience, who tried to implement economic market reforms in Hungary; Beria proposed him to the post of chairman of the Council of Ministers of Hungary; the head of the Hungarian Communist Party, Matias Rakosi, was forced to accept this proposal at the request of the Soviet leadership.

9. We are talking about the upcoming tests of the hydrogen bomb, which were successfully completed in August, but Beria, who was imprisoned, most likely did not find out about his latest success.

10. Colonel Rafael Semenovitch Sarkisov (Sarkisyan) was the head of the personal guard of Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria. After Beria's arrest, he was charged with treason. While in prison, he went crazy, but, nevertheless, in 1959 he was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

11. Nadaraya - Colonel, Sarkisov's deputy. In the past - the commandant of the internal prison of the NKVD of Georgia. In September 1955, in Tbilisi, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison with confiscation of property and loss of rights for 5 years.

12. In the corrected transcript, Shatalin made the following note here: "The list that Sarkisov is talking about has been found, it contains 39 names of women." I note that Pushkin's Don Juan list was three times as large. The question also arises why Sarkisov kept this list in the pocket of his tunic, where it should have been wrinkled or frayed. If sometimes, at the request of Beria, he sometimes had to call one of his mistresses, then it would be more convenient to keep this document in his office. In addition, since May 1953, Sarkisov was no longer the head of the Beria guard, but worked as an assistant to the head of a department in the 1st Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Therefore, it is completely incomprehensible why Beria did not seize the more unnecessary paper from the colonel. In general, this list raises more questions than there are any exact answers.

13. According to the old memory of working with Yezhov, Anastas Ivanovich was dearer to the old name of the bodies - the NKVD. But, more importantly, it seems that Mikoyan really warned Beria that he should not go to the new united Ministry of Internal Affairs, but rather concentrate on economic affairs. Here one can see an indirect recognition that he had a fairly close relationship with Beria. Probably, the highly experienced Mikoyan sensed with a superior instinct in the proposal of "dear comrades" Malenkov and Khrushchev Beria to accept this post as some kind of catch and tried to advise Lavrenty Pavlovich to return to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

14. Malaya Nikitskaya. - B.S.

15. Anti-ship missile project. - (B.S.). Witnesses 6. Chief designer of KB-1 P.N. Kuksenko and the head [At the Special Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR

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